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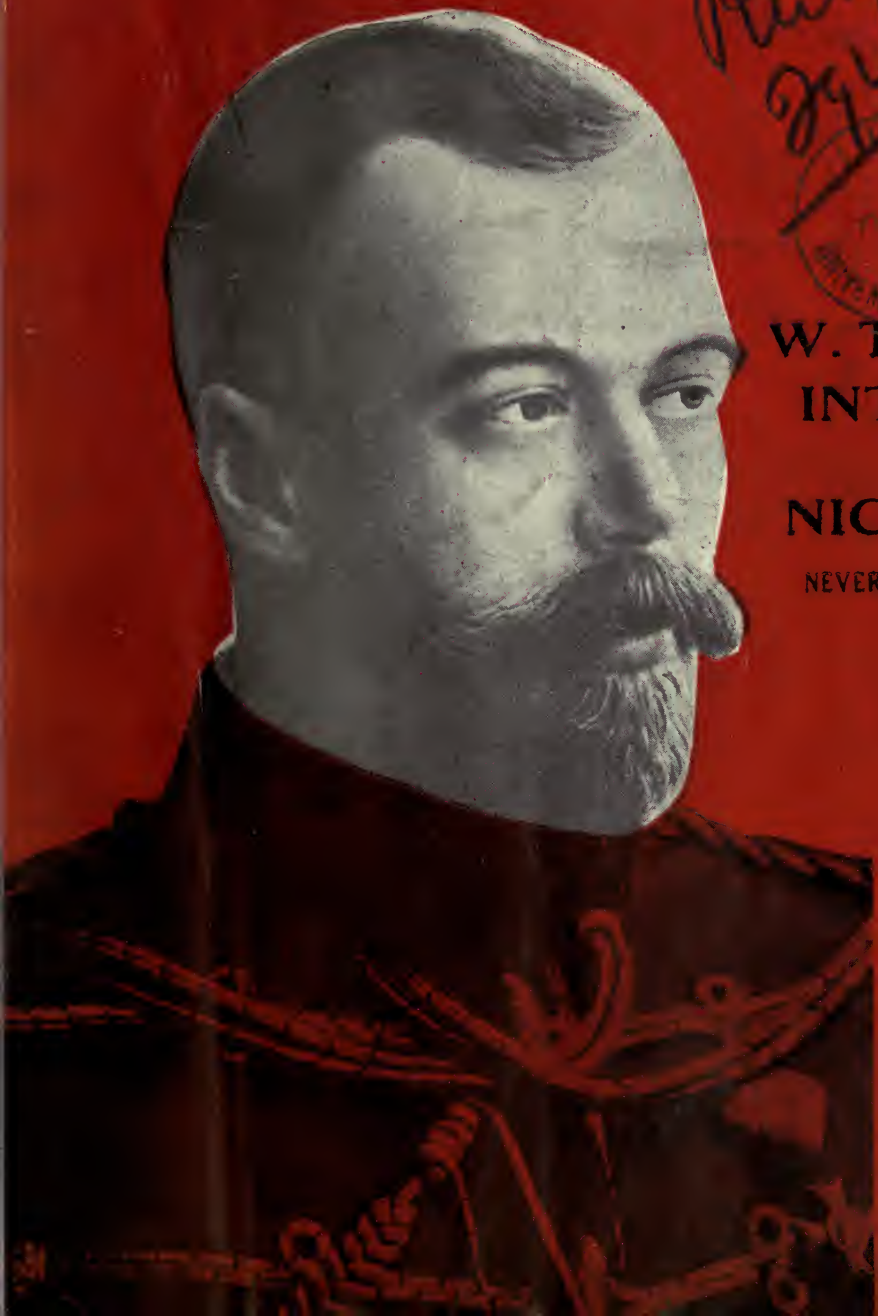

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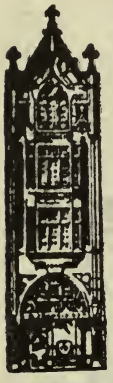

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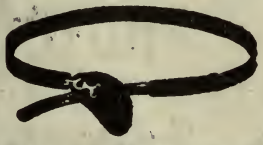

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MARCH 23, 1917.

A Momentous Fortnight.

Writing in our last number, I referred to the previous fortnight as being the most crowded with incident the war had witnessed since the deadlock began in the west. The fortnight which followed, however, has been even more filled with momentous events, although all of these, save one, are the direct result of happenings which had been chronicled before. The arming of American merchantmen has brought about what is practically a state of war between Germany and the great Republic. The retirement in the west from the Bapaume salient has been followed by the evacuation of the Soissons salient by the enemy. The victory at Kut was but the forerunner of the capture of Bagdad. The revival of the Home Rule question has caused the Irish Party to vigorously oppose the Government at Home. All these things were more or less expected, but the most epoch-making happening of all broke upon the world almost unheralded.

The Russian Coup d'Etat.

The papers have given full, if somewhat contradictory, details of the events which led up to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II., and it is hardly necessary to recapitulate them here in detail. The first intimation we had that things were happening in Russia was the bald announcement on Friday, March 16th, that Nicholas had abdicated. This was at first taken to be bad news for the Allies, to be a victory for the pro-Germans in the Empire. Later cables showed that it was actually a defeat for them, and a victory for the forces of liberalism and progress. The reactionaries were hurled from office, and the danger of a separate peace with Germany was definitely over. But it is obviously wrong to describe events of the last week as a revolution. It was a *coup d'etat*, the substitution of one set of men, accustomed to rule, for another familiar with the methods of Government. It was not a rising of the people, but it is perfectly possible that a real revolution which will put the people themselves in control may yet come along. The Tsar abdicated in favour of his brother Michael, but he has refused the crown for the time being, may never get the unanimous invitation without which, he says, he will not mount the throne. At this time of writing, therefore, Russia has no official head. Grand Duke Nicholas was appointed commander-in-chief once more, but that appointment was later cancelled, an action of considerable significance. All

the Grand Dukes have thrown in their lots with the Liberal leaders for the time being, but their past records in some cases do not inspire much confidence that they will really help along the cause of Democracy. More probably will they prove a serious drag on the wheel of progress. All the great generals have declared in favour of the new regime, but unfortunately no one of them appears to be so much above his fellows as to be the obvious commander-in-chief of all the Russian armies.

The Tsar Abdicates.

That there has long been rumbling discontent in Russia was, of course, well known, but that this should culminate in an almost bloodless revolution was entirely unexpected, as unforeseen, in fact, as the dramatic abdication of Nicholas II. These stirring events in Russia will probably have greater influence on the war than either the German retirement in the west or the incoming of the United States. To properly understand the situation in the gigantic Muscovite Empire is almost impossible. We here, so far from the centre of things, are almost entirely cut off from all sources of information, must rely practically altogether on the meagre cables; eeking out the information they give with our own knowledge of Russian conditions. Inevitably we are driven to deduce from the cables considerably more than they tell us, to endeavour all the time to read between the lines. Of this, however, we may be certain, namely, that we are only getting over the wires what those at the moment in control in Petrograd permit us to have. It follows, as a matter of course, therefore, that we are being told the very best that can be told, are hearing nothing it is deemed advisable we shall not hear.

Russia and Peace.

Now that the *coup d'etat* has taken place it is possible to comment more freely upon recent happenings in Russia. There has hitherto been a conspiracy of silence with regard to the discontent within the Muscovite Empire which has every now and again found expression in strikes and rioting. Behind the veil of the Russian censorship much has been occurring of which no whisper has reached the outside world. The *coup d'etat* has, however, torn away the veil, and we can see better, albeit, darkly still. In an article in our February 3rd issue, I touched somewhat lightly upon the question of Russia and Peace, and endeavoured to give my readers some idea of the position of parties in the domains of the Tsar. I there pointed out that there were roughly three main groups, the bureaucrats, the nationalists and the revolutionaries. The first named were reactionary, stood for the old regime, were against granting the people any rights, and although not sympathising with Germany, yet saw in her the bulwark of autocratic rule. This party, therefore, was strongly inclined to make peace with the enemy whilst that could be done with advantage to Russia. In this group were all the supports of autocracy as against democracy. From the Allies' point of view this party was dangerous, and was regarded as more or less pro-German. Yet ever since the war started this group of statesmen and politicians has been in control of the Government of the country. Whilst undoubtedly many of the men at the head of affairs were intensely patriotic, it is perfectly obvious that they failed to prevent their supporters from actively working to brake the Russian war machine.

The Nationalists.

Against the bureaucracy was, of course, ranged the revolutionary party. Its members desired to overthrow the autocracy altogether. They had republican ideas and openly advocated the sweeping away of the Tsar and all his officials. In their ranks were to be found Socialists and Anarchists, dreamers and plotters. Between the bureaucrats on the one side and the revolutionaries on the other, stand the nationalists. Their cry is "Russia for the Russians," but they do not go anything like so far as the revolutionaries. They are, on the whole, moderate in their demands, and do not seek to alter the system of government at one fell swoop. They would rather take existing methods and democratise them. They favour the retention of a hereditary Tsar, do not desire the creation of a republic. The nationalists are anti-German only in so far as the Germans threaten Russia. Could they be sure that that danger could be permanently avoided by the making of peace they would probably end the war at once. They will only go on fighting so long as they are convinced that Russia will get more benefit from war than from peace, for they are pro-Russians before they are pro-Allies or anything else. It is the nationalists who have brought about the *coup d'etat* which has deprived Nicholas of his crown. The Tsar had

found it impossible to throw over the advisers who had surrounded him ever since he ascended the throne, and therefore he had to go when they went. It is ridiculous to call Nicholas a pro-German; he has always been strongly pro-English, but above all he was a lover of his own people, and has shown it by abdicating when he saw that only by so doing could he really serve them.

The Revolutionaries.

But the nationalists were not able to seize control of the Empire without the help of the revolutionary party. These moderates were, indeed, obliged to seek the help of the extremists, and therein lies the tragic danger of the situation. To assume, as so many seem to do, that all is now settled and that the bureaucrats are down and out for good, is absurd. The Grand Dukes, and Counts and Barons, with their bureaucratic following, are not going to sit calmly down and permit others to hold the power which they have for centuries regarded as theirs by divine right. But these men are in a minority, and would be more or less powerless to do any harm provided the moderate forces now in control are able to curb their revoluntionary following. If they fail to do so, then there is every prospect of a real revolution breaking out, and whatever the outcome of such internal strife may be, it is certain that it would gravely interfere with the vigorously determined prosecution of the war. The critical thing at the moment, then, is not so much whether the deposed bureaucrats will endeavour to overthrow the new rulers of Russia as whether these can prevail upon a powerful section of their own following to go slow. The brief references made in the cables to demands for the Tsarina's head, for the imprisonment of Nicholas II., for the execution of leading reactionaries show plainly enough that the revolutionary element is well in evidence. In France the tumbrils, at first filled with aristocrats, later carried the earlier revolutionary leaders to the guillotine. Feeding on its success, the revolution became more and more revolutionary as the days went by. It is perfectly possible that the great, and, indeed, astounding, success of the bloodless revolution engineered by the nationalists may fire the revolutionaries to make demands which would speedily result in violent disruption in the camp of those who now hold the reins of power.

An Army of the People.

Clearly the army has taken a great share in the upheaval which has banished the heads of the century-old bureaucratic regime to oblivion. What attitude is the army going to take towards the new Government? Are the soldiers moderates or extremists? If they are the former, then stable conditions may be immediately anticipated. If, however, they are more in sympathy with the socialists and revolutionaries, trouble is certainly ahead. In speaking of the Russian army we are prone to forget that it is no more like the pre-war army than the huge British army is like the expeditionary force which landed in France in August, 1914. That force was practically wiped out and the Russian army, with its old traditions and ideas, shared the same fate during the early days of the war. The professional army has vanished altogether, what is now in the field is an army of the people. That it is already permeated by democratic ideas is indicated by the cables telling of the refusal of the men to salute their officers and the like. That the soldiers have begun to think for themselves, is shown by their refusal to fire on their own fellows, not in uniform, who thronged the streets and attacked the prisons and houses of reactionaries. Nurses in hospitals report thousands of the wounded soldiers spend their time of convalescence in learning to read and to write, and it is said that the revolutionaries have been carrying on a very active propaganda indeed in the ranks. The Russian moujik, transported from his quiet village right across Russia to the firing line realises, for the first time, that there is a great world beyond the horizon which had for so long bounded his existence. He wakes up with a vengeance, but the new sensations which crowd upon him may cause him to lose his sense of proportion, may make him a fertile field for the sowing of extremist propaganda. The final outcome of the present movement rests so completely upon the doings of the soldier-moujik that we can only hope his plunge into world affairs has not warped or distorted his proverbial good sense.

A Mad Chauffeur.

Russia was seething with conflicting emotions, long before the war began, and ever since the struggle started she has been torn this way and that by her people who wish to do different things, or the same things differently. Intrigue and politics

have, during the last two years and more, been gnawing in her vitals, and the contradictions in a country of contradictions were never so marked as since August, 1914. As one of the liberal leaders well put it over a year ago, the Russian people are in the position of a man passing along the edge of a precipice in a motor-car who sees that his chauffeur has suddenly gone insane. What to do? If he does nothing the demented chauffeur may drive the car over the cliff; but if, on the other hand, he attempts to take the wheel from the irresponsible driver, the unpiloted car may plunge altogether to destruction in the struggle which would certainly ensue. That was the position at the beginning of last year, and, at that time, the Liberal leaders had decided not to risk seizing the wheel, but proposed to trust to luck, keeping a close eye on the chauffeur, with the resolve to throw him overboard if possible should he at any time veer the car too near the edge of the precipice. The occasion has apparently arisen when the nationalists deemed it no longer safe to allow the bureaucratic chauffeur to continue steering the car of State. It would seem, however, that it was not primarily because the man at the wheel was steering perilously near the edge of the abyss that they acted, but because the moment was opportune for effecting the change in chauffeurs without a struggle. The bureaucrats had themselves brought the situation about and had forced the revolutionaries into the arms of the nationalists by their refusal to remedy the serious food shortage in the large cities. Although evidently the train had been carefully laid, it was the starving people who finally fired it. The *coup d'etat* was, in fact, brought about by empty stomachs. The people will stand a lot, but they will not starve at the behest of their rulers! With the people in line behind them, the nationalists struck, and won an almost bloodless victory. But although they are now in power, the Liberal leaders have an exceedingly difficult task ahead.

Rocks Ahead.

First of all they have to keep the revolutionaries, who have felt their own strength, in bounds. Next they have to frustrate the plots of the bureaucrats—past-masters in the art of subterranean intrigue—ragingly determined to regain power. Then they have to settle the Jewish question, have to satisfy Finland, and reconcile the widely differing ideas of the Poles concerning the future of Poland. The food problem calls for immediate solution, and the production of war material must be immensely accelerated. These are a few of the main questions which confront the new administration. There are plenty of others! There appears to be a generally accepted belief that now that the pro-Germans have been swept away, there will be an immediate offensive against the German lines, but that is exceedingly doubtful. The cause of most of the Russian disasters in the field has been lack of ammunition. That cause still obtains. You cannot fill munition depots by a political *coup d'etat!* To do that requires time. Even Great Britain, the greatest manufacturing country amongst the Allies, found is impossible to turn out enough guns and shells for her four million men within a month or two; in fact, it was only last year that the supply began to overtake the demand.

The Question of Munitions.

Russia cannot possibly produce the war material needed by her six million soldiers by her own unaided efforts. She has to rely upon Japan and America, and all the munitions ordered from these countries have to be transported by the 5000-mile-long railway across Siberia. Gigantic guns and shells cannot be conjured up at a word, and, until they are available, there can be no question of a great offensive. It may be, of course, that the necessary war weapons have been sent to Russia and are lying hidden away in sidings, whither they were diverted by corrupt officials; but it is decidedly unlikely. If, in very truth, the armies of Brusiloff and Russky lack munitions, then it is by no means improbable that the Germans will launch a great offensive against them. Such an offensive would not achieve any great military result, for a further retirement into Russia would not seriously harm our Ally, but a notable advance by the Germans would most certainly have a great influence on the political situation. German high command seems still to dream of a separate peace with Russia, and may think the present moment opportune to try and force this by an exhibition of military superiority, having failed to bring it about by political manoeuvring. That, too, we should see within the next few weeks.

The Food Problem.

The food problem of Russia is quite different to that of Germany and of England. Russian granaries are bursting with

food. Poultry and eggs, usually exported in huge quantities, must be available. The trouble has arisen over the transportation of food, not over the lack of it. Apparently the Government took over all supplies some time ago, and took what it required for the army, leaving the balance in the hands of the Governors of the various provinces. In some cases these men appear to have handled the wheat and other supplies with justice and discretion, but more often seized the opportunity to enrich themselves, nor were the police and other officials slow to exploit the needs of the people for their own ends. On top of this the railway accommodation of the Empire, always inadequate, appears to have been found entirely wanting. All endeavours were directed to keeping the armies at the front supplied, and so badly was the traffic handled that it was found impossible to shift the abundance of one province to make good the lack of food in another. That the bureaucratic officials should have wilfully hung up supplies so that the people went hungry is almost incredible, for even they must have known that a starving populace inevitably takes the law into its own hands in the end, but undoubtedly in the eagerness for personal gain, they brought about a situation which, when they recognised the danger, they were powerless to remedy. The food difficulty still remains, although the immediate want has been supplied by the raiding of the granaries of the profiteers. It is only a question of organisation before abundant food is everywhere available; but if there is any delay in bringing it to the people, the new Government will have to suffer for it.

Finland.

Finland will no doubt be a more immediate problem than Poland, as whilst both Finns and Poles want entire autonomy, it is in the immediate power of the Russian rulers to grant it to the former; but nothing very definite could be done for the latter until the end of the war. When a couple of weeks ago the Swedish Prime Minister announced that a situation had arisen which was charged with the gravest dangers for Sweden, many wild guesses were made as to what he meant. It is pretty clear now that he was referring to the Russian crisis, for the Swedes lived in dread of their great neighbour. Although Finland has been part of the Russian Empire for more than a century the Swedes have ever looked upon it as a lost province, with, indeed, even more cause than the French have looked on Alsace-Lorraine, which, after all, was at one time German. The Finnish question is to Russia much what the Irish question has been to England. Successive Tsars have sought to deprive the Finns of the liberties they were granted when, in 1809, their country was finally annexed to Russia. The Russian language was forced on the people, and Russian officials overran the country. Nicholas II. promulgated a new military law soon after his accession, which aimed at incorporating the Finnish forces in the Russian army, whilst further steps were taken to override the Finnish Diet. Matters culminated in 1905, when Finland went "on strike," and quickly forced the Russian Government to give way. My father was in Helsingfors during the rioting, and was able to be of inconsiderable assistance in putting the views of the Finns before the Emperor. Not only was the Diet allowed to meet again, but it was permitted to remodel the constitution. Universal suffrage was brought in, and women, for the first time, were elected members of Parliament and took their seats in the Diet. Unfortunately, though, some three years before the outbreak of the present war there was further friction, and efforts were made to curtail the power of the Diet and override its decisions. Some of its more prominent members were banished to Siberia.

Sweden Waits and Watches.

That the Finns will seize the present opportunity to secure their rights is certain. In theory they have been a self-governing community within the Empire, their only link with Russia proper being the Tsar, who was their hereditary Grand Duke. Their laws, constitution, religion and liberties remained as they were before they entered the Empire, and the Tsar of that day (Alexander I.) solemnly undertook to recognise and uphold them. No Finnish delegates are elected to the Russian Duma, and the Finns have nothing whatever to say in the Government of Russia. What the Finns desire is to revert to the conditions of a century ago, when they were virtually an independent republic, acknowledging the Tsar as suzerain. Supposing Russia establishes a republican form of government, would Finland become a separate State entirely, or would it share in the control of the Russian Empire? Without trying to probe into the future we can confidently assert that the present is an opportunity to win real freedom the Finns will not fail

to take every advantage of. One would imagine that Sweden stands ready to help them should occasion arise.

The Polish Difficulties.

The Finnish problem, though perhaps more urgently demanding settlement, is simplicity itself, compared to the Polish. The Poles have always been their own worst enemies. Brave, they are, and of a higher civilisation than the Russians, but they have ever quarrelled amongst themselves, and it is this unfortunate bickering which had kept them in subjugation. When the war broke out it was welcomed by the Polish leaders much as a quarrel amongst their guards would be welcomed by prisoners, but if the prisoners, instead of siding with one or other of their keepers, or making good their escape at once, remain on the spot wrangling concerning the best method to adopt to secure their freedom, the opportunity passes and does not return. When Austria, Germany, and Russia went to war the Poles, by united action, could undoubtedly have won a large measure of autonomy. But instead of following a settled line of policy the Poles showed divided councils. Some joined one side, some the other, and many remained neutral. In the end we see their country entirely in the hands of the Teutonic Powers, and they themselves being bribed by promises of independence on condition they raise an army to help their latest conquerors. On the other side the Tsar offered them self-government if they would stand true to him. When the Grand Duke Nicholas compelled the evacuation of Poland, as he retired, millions of these folk wandered aimlessly along the roads into Russia, many falling by the wayside. It is estimated that at least 10,000,000 men, women and children were swept away from Poland and the other western provinces, and that some 2,000,000 of them died on the road to Russia. This unwilling migration certainly embittered the Poles against the Russians, and it has now been generally recognised that the military advantages of denuding the country before the advancing enemy were but slight compared to the disadvantages arising from the resentment of the deportees and the food and other problems raised in Russia itself by the sudden influx of these millions of totally unprovided-for people. I have mentioned this forced exodus because it makes more difficult than ever the settling of the Polish question.

The Treatment of the Jews.

Involved in that problem is the Jewish question, too. It is a curious and unwelcome fact that in Russia only the Jews love the Jews. It is true that the Liberals have more or less championed their cause, but for political reasons and because they realise that no nation can be truly great that does not treat all its members fairly, not because they love the Jew. Whilst there are many Jewish leaders who have won high regard in Russia, there is no doubt that the bulk of them have pushed their own narrow interests whenever they got the chance, to the detriment of the larger democratic interests of those who were fighting for them. In fact the Liberals—at any rate in pre-war days—did not regard the Jews as good allies. Still the manner in which they have hitherto been treated in Russia explains their narrowness, for so little was granted them that they were obliged to look after themselves without much regard for others, also shouldering their way along the straight and difficult path which leads to political liberty. The persecutions of the Jews were usually carried out by the bureaucracy, the peasants themselves taking little part, and, with the disappearance of the ancient regime, the outlook for the Jews should be vastly better. The abolition of the pale may result in their permanent withdrawal from Poland, which would certainly help solve that thorny problem. The Poles, when they had the power, did not treat the Jews well, and they resent all outside interference in the matter, insisting that the Jewish question, so far as Poland is concerned, is a matter of purely internal interest which must be left for them to deal with as they see fit. In Galicia, where the Poles are virtually self-governing, they have demonstrated themselves lacking in any desire to permit the Ruthenians to share in the control of the province, although the latter are almost as numerous there as the Poles themselves. There is no doubt whatever, though, that the Polish, Finnish and Jewish questions are far nearer solution now that a Liberal and democratic Government is in power in Russia.

Prince Lvoff and the Zemstvos.

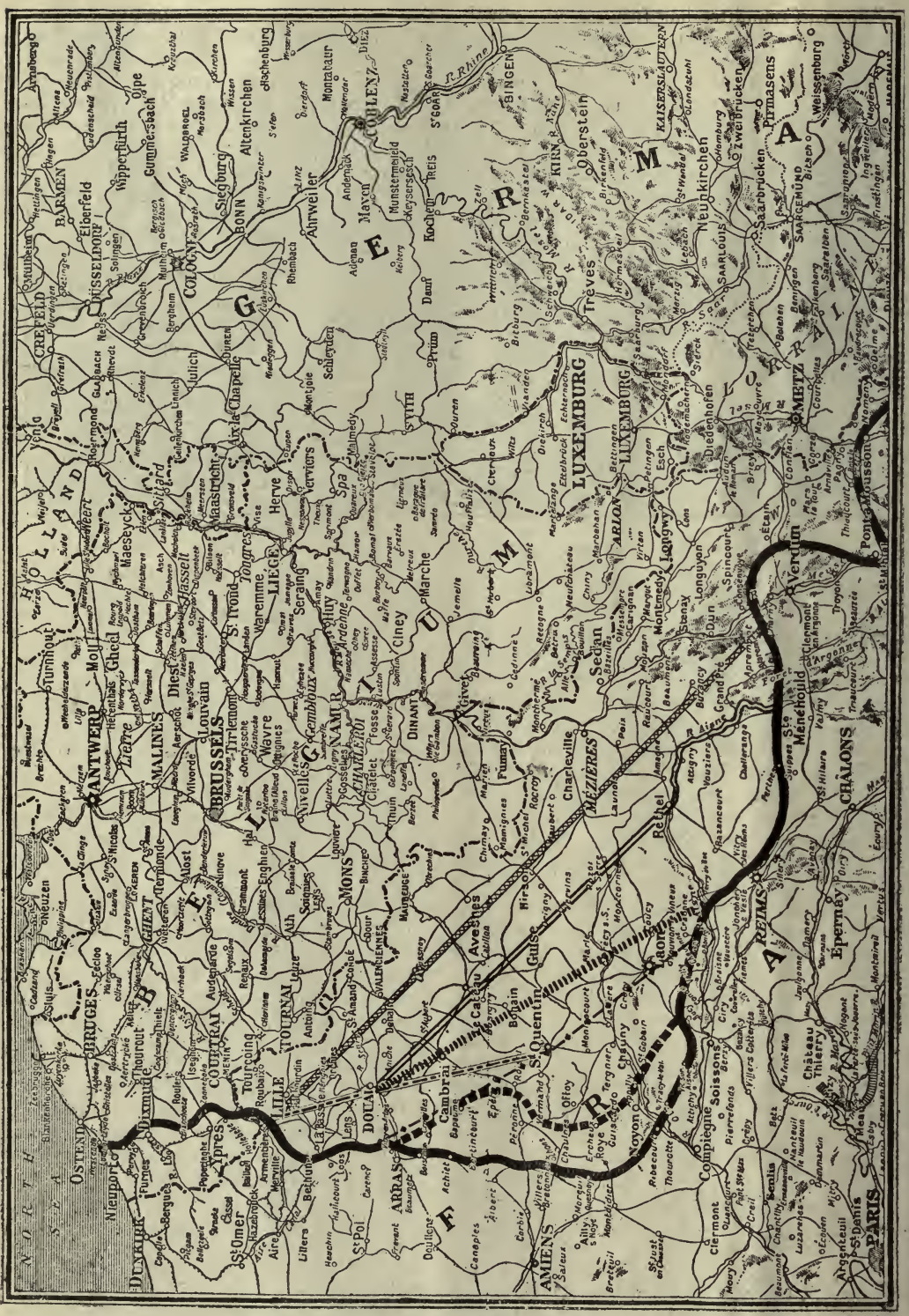
The making of Prince Lvoff Prime Minister is one of the most reassuring things about the whole movement, for he has the Zemstvos solid behind him, and is probably the most trusted man in Russia to-day. He is an aristocrat but not a bureaucrat, and long ago separated himself from the narrow

A RUSSIAN FIELD KITCHEN AT WORK.

class policy of the late regime. He saw in the Zemstvos the foundation of an organisation for the salvation of Russia. The Zemstvos are the local provincial self-governing bodies of the great Empire. They have been united in what is called the *Zemsky Sayuze*, of which Prince Lvoff is head. Since the war began the Sayuze and the Zemstvos have mightily increased in power, and at their headquarters, in a long low building in Moscow, the true heart of Russia can be heard throbbing. It was there that the real brain of Russia was too, for beneath its roof had been gathered together all the most talented men of the Empire, come to give their best for their country. There with an utter absence of red tape a mighty business organisation has been created for the mobilisation of Russia's vast resources for the service of the army. There in very truth Russia found herself. Right at the beginning of the struggle Prince Lvoff and the other Zemstvo leaders offered to take charge of military sanitation and medical matters. Their offer at first refused, was finally accepted, although it was specified that no Zemstvo doctors or nurses should be allowed in the field hospitals near the front. Soon, however, this prohibition was withdrawn, the terrible carnage having forced the Government to accept all the help it could get. A year ago the Zemstvos had fifty splendidly equipped hospital trains, and supported 170,000 beds for wounded soldiers. The War Office, at that time, supported by 90,000 and, the Russian Red Cross took care of 40,000. The municipalities have 70,000. It is a fact worth bearing in mind that the majority of Russia's wounded have been cared for and nursed by the people themselves, not by military nurses and doctors. The result of that we may be seeing to-day. The Zemstvos committee have taken charge of the supply of medical necessaries, all of which have to be imported *via* Vladivostok or through Sweden. It distributes them to all the hospitals throughout Russia.

The People Care for the Army.

Next the committee asked to be allowed to help in feeding the army, and was promptly refused; but soon things became so bad that its help was accepted, and the Zemstvos were entrusted with the feeding of all the sappers in the armies. This they did without any Government intermediary, and later they organised a force of sappers of their own for the digging of trenches behind the first line. Soon they had taken over the feeding of all soldiers *en route* to or from the front, and finally they undertook to supply the clothes the soldiers need. Practically all the shoes and boots worn by the Russian soldiers are made by their brothers, sisters, and fathers and mothers. Boots and garments are made in the homes of the peasants; they are not turned out in great factories. Even bombs and hand grenades are made at home. The


NORTH SEA
HOLLAND
BELGIUM
GERMANY
FRANCE
LUXEMBURG
DUNKIRK
OSTEND
BRUGES
NIEUPORT
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CALAIS
BOULOGNE
ARRAS
DOUAI
LILLE
COURTRAI
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BRUSSELS
LOUVAIN
TIRLEMONT
NAMUR
CHARLEROI
MONS
VALENCIENNES
CAMBRAI
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BOHAIN
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AVESNES
HIRSON
MEZIERES
SEDAN
MONTMEDY
LONGWY
VERDUN
METZ
THIONVILLE
DIEDENHOFEN
SAARLOUIS
SAARBRUCKEN
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PRUM
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WITTLICH
BERNKASTEL
COBLENZ
ANDERNACH
MAYEN
AHRWEILER
REMAGEN
BONN
COLOGNE
KREFELD
DUSSELDORF
ELBERFELD
BARMEN
SIEGBURG
ALTENKIRCHEN
GUMMERSBACH
WIPPERFURTH
MUNSTEREIFEL
EUSKIRCHEN
RHEINBACH
BINGEN
KREUZNACH
KIRN
OBERSTEIN
KAISERSLAUTERN
NEUNKIRCHEN
SAARGEMUND
ZWEIBRUCKEN
BINGEN
R. RHINE
R. MOSELLE
R. SAAR
R. MEUSE
R. SAMBRE
R. SCHELDT
R. LYS
R. AISNE
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R. VESLE
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Zemstvo Committee has fostered the growth of co-operative societies all over the country, and it is said that already the male membership is 12,000,000. These concern themselves with dairy produce, the making of linen, formerly imported from Great Britain, and many other activities. The general organisation of the nation has been carried out by the leaders of the Zemstvos, and their chief has now been called to organise the whole Empire for victory. He is better fitted than any other man for the mighty task. Mr. Mason, who recently visited Russia and wrote a most interesting series of articles on internal conditions there, thus describes the effect of the Zemstvo movement on the country :—

> Thousands of Russians who never had a chance at public life before are getting it now through the union of the Zemstvos, the co-operative societies and the general organising of a nation in arms. The army is getting to know the people, and the people is getting to know the army as never before. The soldier who is fed, clothed, washed and nursed by representatives of the people will be likely to shoot high if ever he is directed to suppress a popular rising; nay, will he not be likely to lend his own strength to any organised effort vital to the welfare of the people that are to-day caring for him? Terrible as it is in its most palpable forms, this war may be a good thing for Russia. It is a turning point in Russian history. Through it the heart of Russia has learned to know the brain and feed it, and the brain of Russia has learned to know the heart and direct it.

A forecast which the events of the last few days have proved to be quite correct.

The German Withdrawal.

The long accounts of the British and French advance in the west, which are now appearing daily in the papers, prove quite conclusively to all except those wilfully blind that all our men are doing is to occupy territory already abandoned by the enemy. There is no question whatever of a mighty offensive or a stern battle. The only engagements which have taken place are those with the German rearguards—that is to say, with troops whose sole function is to delay our advance when this begins in any way to press on the retiring armies of the enemy. Their business is to fight and then run away, though not infrequently our impetuous assaults cut off their escape. Realising, however, the function of a rearguard, we need not place too much faith in the accounts of fierce fighting, and the capture of positions stubbornly held. The enemy naturally are not going to hold positions, far in advance of the selected battle line to which they are retiring, any longer than is necessary to check our pursuit for a few hours when this proves too rapid and begins to interfere with the ordered retirement which is being systematically carried out. That this withdrawal has been long preparing is evidenced by the thorough manner in which the enemy are destroying roads, bridges, railways and villages, and by the fact that although millions of soldiers must be concerned, our captures can be numbered in hundreds only.

Where is the New Line to be?

There is much speculation naturally concerning the extent of the German retirement. Is it merely an evacuation of the two salients, known respectively as Bapaume and Soissons, or is it more than that? Will the enemy in fact not halt until they reach what is known as the Meuse line? The accompanying map shows the lines which may be taken up, although of course the topography of the country will determine the exact front selected on whichever line is finally adopted. A mere evacuation of the two salients would leave the enemy on a line running roughly from Arras to St. Quentin, thence to Laon, on to the present front at Croanne. If St. Quentin has been abandoned, as seems to be suggested by the cables, then the line would run east of that place, but still west of Cambrai. The abandonment of this last town, important centre as it is, would be surprising, but if the Germans do leave it they would probably also withdraw further north to Douai. Another possible line would run more or less straight from Douai to Rethel on the Aisne, and would follow that stream up to the Argonne Forest, through which the opposing trenches have run for over two years. If the retirement is to the Meuse, the Germans will be found entrenched along that river from Verdun to Mezieres, from which place their front would approximately parallel the Belgian frontier to Lille. Retreat to the Meuse line would mean the evacuation of almost all the French territory originally seized by the invaders. It is possible that the Germans might run their new front to Arras instead of to Lille, so important is that city, but if they did so they would leave a salient, Lille-Arras-Cambrai, jutting into the English lines which would prove a vulnerable spot. By withdrawing to the Meuse, the enemy would apparently shorten the front to be defended by at least sixty miles, probably by 100, for the new front would be fairly straight, whereas the old was of a somewhat snakey formation. It is roughly

reckoned that it required 10,000 men to hold a mile of front. The Germans have, we know, managed with less, thanks to the perfection of their railway communications and the number of their machine guns, but obviously a 100 mile reduction will mean a saving of well over 500,000 men, who could be available for special service wherever wanted.

What Does It All Mean?

What everyone wants to know of course is why the Germans are withdrawing. Any number of reasons have been advanced to explain the present movement, but many are contradictory, and the majority are speculative. We are told, for instance, that the enemy are falling back, but to spring again and overwhelm the armies of France and Britain in the open. It is asserted that the retirement is a subtle scheme of Hindenburg's to upset all our plans for offensive this spring. Others hold that shortage of men has compelled the withdrawal and others again insist that our new heavy artillery has made the old front entirely untenable. With regard to the first assumption it is highly improbable that von Hindenburg intends to lure us on with the object of catching us in a trap. Had that been the object of the retirement it would have been necessary for the Germans to have retained some "jumping off" place, to have anchored themselves to certain spots, leaving them as great promontories jutting out into the sea of pursuit which would storm past them. From these points of vantage they would launch their millions when the tide of the British and French advance had gone far enough behind them. There is no evidence whatever that any attempt has been made to create any such salient or salients as the enemy fell back. We may, I think, entirely dismiss the possibility of a general fight in the open unless the retirement is to be to the Meuse line. If the Germans are prepared to go as far back as that, then a great open battle might easily take place. Certainly the Germans have had plenty of practice in that sort of warfare in the east, whereas our new armies have been trained chiefly with a view to trench fighting.

Our Offensive Postponed.

It is self-evident that the enemy withdrawals must upset any particular plans made by the British General Staff for an offensive this spring. For a drive against the tremendously strong defensive works in the west to be successful great preparations are required. Guns must be massed in great quantities, ranges must be accurately gauged, the whole plan of operations must be exhaustively worked out. The withdrawal of the enemy forces us on to unknown ground, will leave us, when it has ended, up against the strongest sort of trench defences in country thoroughly surveyed by our foes, which has been denuded of natural cover prepared by them—that is to say, for us to operate in. That being the case, our offensive must inevitably be postponed until we can overcome the special difficulties the Germans will have thrown in our way until we can regiment our forces, adapt our weapons to the new conditions. But it will be at once objected, as the object of our spring offensive was to drive back the Germans, we have already obtained that object without having to sacrifice thousands of lives and fire millions of shells, thanks to the enemy retirement we are now witnessing. There is considerable truth in that, providing always that the aim of the anticipated drive was merely to push back the foe, not to break clean through his defences at a certain spot and force, a rapid retreat, which our leaders counted on turning into an enemy debacle.

Time—On Whose Side?

Now, to push back here and there, as we pushed back after six months' furious fighting on the Somme, would not win us the war. It would merely further demonstrate the deadlock unbreakable. Our spring offensive, to be successful, would have had to break through and force a headlong flight. By retiring, as they are doing, the Germans certainly greatly postpone the delivery of an Allied hammer stroke against their front, probably put off a successful attempt on our part to smash clean through their line for another year. That would not matter much really, and we could regard this present retirement as in very truth a mighty victory for us, providing time still fights on our side. If it does, then every square mile abandoned by the foe is a distinct gain to us, brings nearer the inevitable, if distant, victory. If, however, it does not, but rather favours the enemy, then the withdrawal to new positions prepared during the last year by the German General Staff, with all the experience gained from twenty-eight months of trench warfare, can hardly be looked on as an immense success for our arms. It all depends upon whether the Allies or the Germans can, from an economic point of view, best manage to carry on the war for two or three years longer.

Saving Men.

The withdrawal may be forced on the Germans by lack of men, yet that is not very probable, because during the last few months the losses cannot have been very heavy. It is now agreed that the big guns won victory over the Roumanians, and the recent combing out of eligibles, together with the youths who during the last year have reached military age, has not improbably increased the armies of the Central Powers by considerably over a million men, so that, even allowing for heavy losses during 1916, there are likely more soldiers with the colours to-day than there were twelve months ago. In our last number I showed that the withdrawal from the Bapaume salient had been rendered necessary, thanks to our successful efforts on the Somme, and indicated that it was not improbable that this evacuation might be followed by the abandonment of the Soissons salient as well. The withdrawal from these two salients then may be accounted for by inability to hold them without grave danger of eventual disaster, but, if the enemy retire from a large tract of territory behind these salients as well, then the desire to hold the west front with fewer men must have been a contributing cause when the German leaders decided on withdrawal. They could defend a Meuse line, for instance, with far fewer men. It would be much nearer their bases of supplies, and the "army of shock" could be more quickly and easily hurried to the defence of any threatened spot than has been the case with the old front, which it must be remembered was hastily taken up, was not carefully chosen as the new one will certainly have been.

The Old Line a Makeshift.

The line which has held for two years was selected hurriedly when the Germans retreated before the victorious armies of France. It was an improvised affair, a makeshift, which, although greatly strengthened as the months went by, was still a make-shift, not a front which military experience would have chosen as ideal. Even Hilaire Belloc has publicly recanted his first assertion that the Germans were carefully preparing the Aisne line whilst they flung their armies towards Paris. When they were defeated at the Marne they retreated hastily and dug in furiously at the first place which offered a fairly suitable defence against the oncoming French. Had Joffre been able to throw strong forces against these improvised defences the moment he came up to them, he would probably have stormed right through, and the deadlock line would have been built much further east. However, the French generals were unaware of the strength of the enemy positions, their men were exhausted, and the chance slipped through their fingers. I have touched on this at some length, in order to show that, by withdrawing to another defensive front, as perfect as military science working carefully and at leisure has been able to make it, the Germans will be able to hold their new western line with far fewer men than were required for their old front. If then, the retirement has as object the releasing of a great number of soldiers, the natural question we want answered is, "Where do the enemy intend to use them?"

The Paris Dream Abandoned.

Last year the Germans compelled us to postpone our offensive until too late in the season by their furious assault against Verdun. This year they have forced us to postpone our mighty drive, with small loss to themselves, by retiring to another front. Will they then utilise the time gained in order to strike a furious blow in some other theatre, or will they launch a great attack against British or French before these can properly consolidate their new positions, which must necessarily be on ground of German choosing. I hardly think we need expect assault in the west. The enemy cannot hope now to trap and utterly defeat the armies of either Britain or France, as at different times they have the Russian and the Roumanian, and the withdrawal shows clearly enough that they have given up all dreams of getting to Paris or driving through to Calais. All they can apparently hope to do in the west is to hold us completely at bay, and, the retirement having interrupted our preparations for the great drive, will probably content themselves with sitting down and waiting for us to throw ourself against their new defences. Naturally, they would indulge in minor offensives, the only object of which would be to delay our arrangements for assaults at given spots, but it would indeed be surprising if any mighty drive by the Germans materialises on the west front during 1917.

Where will the Blow Fall?

If that reasoning be right, where then will the enemy stroke fall? It is of course inconceivable that the German army chiefs will fail to utilise the new army the retire-

CROSSING THE DANUBE.
Roumanian troops retreating from the northern Dobrudja to the left bank of the great river.

ment will give them, to the full, but where will it be used? In Italy, in Russia, in Roumania, in the Balkans or in Turkey? No one in Australia can possibly say, but of one thing we may be quite certain, wherever the blow does fall it will be a furious one, intended to bring quick results, not merely to keep opposing forces occupied. It is certainly unlikely that many German troops would be used in Turkey, but it is inevitable that all the Ottoman soldiers now in Europe will be hastily withdrawn and rushed to Asia Minor to endeavour to check the Anglo-Indian and Russian advance in Mesopotamia and Armenia. No doubt German commanders and a stiffening of Teutonic soldiers will go with them, for the presence of Allied forces at Badgad, with its threat of cutting Turkey in twain, vitally endangers the German dream of the creation of an Empire in the Orient, strikes at the root of the *Drang Nach Osten* policy, the realisation of which has now become the principal aim of the German leaders, is, indeed, the chief stumbling block in the way of peace. The withdrawal of the Turks will force the Germans to replace them with some of the men saved from the western front, but a great army would still be left available.

Russia Un-get-at-able.

Von Hindenburg has, apparently, always urged that Russia should be strongly attacked, holds, at least so we are informed, that victory can only be won in the east. Russia is, however, so un-get-at-able, so invulnerable, that it is difficult to see how even the most successful possible campaign against the Muscovites could end the war, or even greatly advantage the enemy. True, such an onslaught, at the present moment, might have far-reaching political result, might, because of the position created by the *coup d'etat* materially hasten the end of the war. An offensive in the eastern theatre, though, would be a political, not a military, move, and it depends upon local developments in Russia whether it would pay the enemy to embark on it or not. The same conditions control the possibility of an attempt against Russia on the Roumanian front. The enemy have reached and entrenched themselves securely on the Sereth line, and there can now be little advantage to them to try and reach the Pruth. If they do so, their ultimate object would be Odessa, but, from a purely military point of view, the loss of that great port would not seriously cripple Russia. When we come to the Balkans we quickly find that the only danger to Bulgaria, and therefore to Germany, lies in the presence of Italians on the peninsula. Although we have never been given the exact number of men Sarrail has under his command, his inaction, when the Bulgarians were assisting the Germans to overrun Bessarabia and the Dobrudja, shows clearly enough that he had not enough to attempt anything in the nature of a diversion. Equally obvious is it that Italy, after the Rome conference, took a hand, and, owing to her intervention, the Greeks quickly submitted to Allied de-

mands. If the Italians intend to enter vigorously on a Balkan campaign, they can seriously threaten the road from Constantinople to Berlin, but no other Power, France, England or Russia, could do so. Therefore, if there is real danger to the quadruple Alliance in the Balkans, German high command would obviously counter it from the Trentino, not by sending troops to the peninsula itself.

Italy the Probable Objective.

This process of elimination brings us finally to Italy. To arrive at any just estimate of the possibility of an enemy offensive against our Latin Ally, we must ascertain what advantages would come to the Germans if they were successful, what danger at present threatens them in that quarter. I have already touched on the possibilities in the Balkans. In addition, the Italians seriously threaten Trieste, and, if they won the place, would be in a position to cripple Austrian activity in the Adriatic by striking across the Pola peninsula to Fiume. Only there are the Central Powers at all seriously endangered by Italian activity. But to defend Trieste, to hold the long frontier which bends in a great 400 mile arc from the Gulf of Trieste to the lake of Garda, Austria has to have a comparatively large army. Even if there is no immediate danger of Italian attack, the men have to be there in case such should suddenly develop. If it were possible to use the soldiers liberated from the western war theatre to drive down from the Trentino to Venice, not only would Trieste be entirely freed from danger, but the front to be held against Italy would be reduced by no less than 350 miles. Last year the Austrians carried out a big offensive from the Trentino, but the object of that drive was to relieve the pressure against Gorz, rather than to get through to Venice. Yet that offensive, though made with insufficient men, to make way against the Italian armies concentrated at the foot of the Alps, nevertheless showed that a drive in force towards the Venetian plain might win success. The Italians of course have had their lesson, and we may assume have made entirely adequate provision of the rough reception of any enemy force which may be hurled against them from the mountains, no matter how formidable and numerous were the troops employed. All the same, a deliberate campaign against Italy, carried out as von Hindenburg and von Mackensen carried out those against Russia and Roumania, would obviously be a dangerous thing.

The Italians Should be Ready.

The main Italian armies are presumably camped in Venetia, and on the Carso plain, waiting the coming of spring to make the final effort needed to win Trieste. A formidable enemy offensive from Trieste, followed immediately by the appearance of a great army in the Trentino passes, would create a situation full of danger. The Austrian army hammering away on the Carso plain, and all along the Isonzo front, would have to be held in check, and, at the same time, forces would have to be concentrated against the enemy storming down from the Trentino. If the defences on either of these fronts were penetrated by the foe the danger to the army which held would obviously be great, for, owing to the geographical position of Venetia, it is peculiarly open to attack, whilst there is always the danger that an entire army might be trapped on its plains. Only forty miles separated Venice from the Austrian frontier. Once the enemy covered those miles and reached the sea, all the Italian forces in Venetia would be at their mercy. The danger is so very obvious that we should be quite confident that all the necessary measures have long ago been taken to nullify it. All the same, I think if the Germans do embark on a great offensive anywhere, it will be in the south rather than the west or east. Even if success were to crown enemy effort against Italy it does not by any means follow that our Ally would be forced into a separate peace, or even be very seriously crippled. Still, from the enemy point of view, there would be such great military advantages that even if no political ones followed the venture would be well worth embarking on.

The Glorious City Falls.

The British have crowned their second campaign in Mesopotamia by the occupation of Bagdad, the "Glorious City" of the Turks. This capture was a brilliant achievement, all the more gratifying because of the disasters which had hitherto dogged our steps in the land of the twin rivers. Whilst its possession is of some strategic value, the greatest benefit we are likely to derive from its capture is the effect this will have in the Islamic world. The actual entering of the city was easy enough, of course, for it is an "open town," but to get so quickly within striking distance was indeed a notable achievement. The position is vastly

different to what it was in November, 1915, when General Townshend advanced from Lajj to strike at Bagdad. He had at most 14,000 men with him. He had behind a long line of communications practically unguarded, and the only connection he had with his main base was a treacherous, winding river 573 miles long. He had, it is true, severely defeated the Turks, and was following a fleeing army, but it was an army falling back upon reinforcements, and its leaders knew that, even if it did get into the glorious city, the fate of the gallant Anglo-Indian army was sealed, there being no reinforcements anywhere available.

Depends on the Russians.

We have learned by past experience, and have avoided the ghastly blunders which again and again occurred during the previous campaign. No longer does the invading army rely solely upon a shallow winding river for the transport of men and supplies. General Maude has a railway behind him. Not only is communication now rapid, but plenty of men are available. Undoubtedly the danger of an enemy getting behind the main force and cutting the supply line has been eliminated by the methodical clearing of the twin river, the Euphrates, which parallels the Tigris to the west. Bagdad cannot well be defended and it was therefore imperative that the army should at once push northwards and prevent the massing of Turkish troops at Samara, nor can that advance well stop until Mosul be reached, the most important military centre in that part of the world. Even now, despite the brilliant manner in which the Anglo-Indian army has demonstrated its efficiency, one would have some doubts about its safety were it not for the advance of the Russians from Persia, and the presence in Armenia of a large Russian army. The arrival of the British force in the neighbourhood of Bagdad compelled the Turks in Persia to fall back before the Russians. There is as yet no news of a Russian advance from Armenia, but it is to be hoped that will not be long delayed, for we may be quite certain that the Turks and their German advisers will gather a great army together for the re-taking of Bagdad at the earliest possible moment. Even if they make no attempt to win back the city until after the floods are over, they are certain to concentrate a large force at Mosul in order to check any attempt on the part of Russia to drive a way through to Alexandretta.

The Turks Will Make Great Efforts.

The Turks are by no means a spent force, in fact it is quite probable that they have at this moment a better equipped army in the field than ever before. The recall of the troops sent to Europe to assist in the

TURKISH INFANTRY,
German trained and equipped, at a station in the Taurus Mountains, on the Bagdad railway.

campaign against Roumania, and to help guard the Russian front, will further strengthen them, and these men, too, will bring back a knowledge of modern military strategy which they will not be slow to use against both Russians and British in Asia Minor. To set down this obvious truth is not in any way to detract from the brilliant manner in which Bagdad was reached and won, and it may well be that we will have an immediate further success to chronicle. Russians are slowly driving the Turks out of Persia, and the line of retreat leads the Sultan's beaten forces through the frontier town of Khanikin. Already our cavalry is approaching that place from Bagdad, and it looks entirely possible that the enemy will be trapped there between Muscovite and Briton. Much depends, of course, upon the strength of the Russians—their slow advance suggests that they are not in great force—and upon whether the Turks are coming down from Mosul to the rescue of their fellows from Persia or are being kept fully employed by the Russian army pushing south from Bitlis.

At War, but Not an Ally.

Although there has not yet been any official declaration of war between the United States and Germany, the arming of American merchantmen, as I pointed out last time would inevitably be the case, has caused what is practically a state of war to exist. President Wilson, finding he had the executive power to arm the ships, and knowing that he had a practically unanimous Congress behind him, proceeded to have guns mounted on board merchantmen in American harbours. Although it is said that one or more of these armed ships has sailed for Europe, it is doubtful whether they have yet left port. Some are on the eve of going though, even if they have not yet gone. Meanwhile, the German U boats have sunk American ships in the blockade area, without warning, and American lives have been lost. Dr. Wilson has called a special session of Congress for April 2nd, and, unless the unforeseen happens, will formally ask that a declaration of war against Germany be made. In our last number I explained how it might be quite possible for the United States to be at war with Germany, yet not be allied with us, and that view is now being pretty generally adopted. It is obvious enough that the Americans are exceedingly loath to plunge into the struggle, will endeavour in every possible way to limit their activities to the safeguarding of their sailors and ships on the high seas. When we come to think over it, America has little concern with the majority of those things for which the Allies are fighting. It does not make much difference to the Americans whether Poland, for instance, enjoys autonomy under a Russian or an Austrian ruler—they are not greatly concerned as to who controls Turkey, so long as the Sultan is forced to behave himself by someone able to exact obedience. Whether France gets back Alsace-Lorraine or not will make no difference whatever in the new world. In fact, the United States would not have been dragged into the struggle at all were it not for the challenge to the freedom of the seas which has been more loudly shouted by Germany than by any other belligerent, although, in the American view, Great Britain has gone further than she had a right to do if we may judge by the despatches from Washington concerning the right of search and the opening of American mails.

Armed Neutrality.

It was interference with her ships and sailors which brought the United States into war a century ago, and it is worth while recalling the incidents which led up to the break between America and England, as it is just possible that the United States, instead of declaring formal war against Germany, may resort to an armed neutrality similar to that which preceded the war of 1812. During the War of Independence France and Spain went to war with England, and so irksome did the restrictions on neutral trade become, that the neutrals formed an armed neutrality league. The Powers concerned were Denmark, Prussia, Austria, Sweden, Russia and Portugal. They demanded the free passage of neutral ships from port to port, and along the coasts of combatant nations, the inviolability of an enemy's goods in neutral ships—with the exception of such goods as were contraband of war—and the exact definition of a blockaded port. This league did what it could to enforce its demands by vehement protestation and by convoying its merchant ships. It was not, however, strong enough in warships to force general compliance, but the United States, Spain and France gave it recognition, and it even secured from England—then, as now, the dominant sea power—considerable modifications in the matter of search and confiscation. Later, in the Napoleonic wars, the United States was constrained to convoy its ships, and, indeed, in order to protect its

sea rights, the American Government broke off diplomatic relations with France in 1798 and Congress authorised American warships to capture French vessels guilty of depredations on American commerce. As a result actual naval engagements were fought, though no formal declaration of war was ever made. After a year of it the French Government backed down.

An Awkward Possibility.

In 1812, after strongly protesting to Great Britain concerning the manner in which American ships were stopped and searched, and American subjects, formerly Britishers, were forcibly taken from amongst the crews, the United States declared war in order to protect her interests. It may be that on this occasion the Americans will content themselves with arming their merchantmen and convoying them across the Atlantic, holding themselves justified in sinking any German submarine that ventured to approach them. Supposing they do this, a somewhat complicated and interesting situation might well arise. At present every American ship is either taken into British harbours for examination or is searched on the high seas. Almost invariably the former course is adopted. As shown by Secretary Lansing's protest, and the British reply, all mails whether for or from America, carried on American or neutral ships, are opened and examined in Great Britain. What, one wonders, would be the attitude of a British commander whose duty it was to bring every ship he met into port, when he came across an American mail boat bound for Holland and convoyed by an American warship? If the captain of the convoying vessel gave an assurance that no contraband was being carried, would the British ship demand the right to search through the mails, a right the Americans assert is not given by international law. No doubt the good sense of the two Governments would settle the matter, but it is one of those difficult problems which might well arise at any moment. It is probable that this question of the freedom of the seas may be one of the chief causes which would prevent the United States allying herself with the *Entente* even if she declares war against Germany, for such adhesion would give tacit approval to Allied practice in the matter of search and seizure, against which the American Government has again and again protested.

GENERAL LYAUTEY.

Former Governor of Morocco, who was appointed War Minister in France recently, and whose resignation precipitated the French political crisis.

Political Crisis in France.

The resignation of the French War Minister, General Lyautey, precipitated a political crisis and resulted in the fall of Aristide Briand, the clever statesman, who has been in charge of the destinies of France almost since the war began. He has been succeeded by the Grand Old Man of French politics, M. Ribot, but most of his colleagues remain in the Cabinet. In ordinary times a change in the French Government means little or nothing. It is indeed anticipated every few months; but at a time like this it has considerably more significance. Naturally, we are all attempting to discover the reason for the upset of Briand, who had shortly before obtained an almost unanimous vote of confidence in his War Cabinet. The reason may perhaps be found in M. Ribot's declaration of policy. He said that the question of the high command in France had given rise to many debates, but that it had now been definitely settled. The Government, he said, was to be master of all that concerns the organisation and maintenance of the armies, but when it has chosen a leader it will leave him complete freedom for the strategic conception, preparation and direction of operations. From this one would certainly gather that the difficulty has been over the

selection of a commander-in-chief who would agree to bow to political control to some extent. Apparently the commander has not yet been chosen, and it is certainly somewhat unfortunate that at a time of crisis like this, when, for the first time, the enemy takes a step backwards, there should be no commander-in-chief in charge of the French armies.

The Food Question in Britain.

Across the Channel, too, matters are not quite as happy as they might be. Lloyd George was made Prime Minister to win the war, but he has had to devote himself very largely to matters of domestic concern. The food question, the labour question, the Irish question, all clamour for immediate settlement. So far as the food shortage is concerned, the matter is well summed up by "Agricola," in *The English Review*. He says:—"Owing to the steady drainage of labour from the land, the difficulty of the farmers' position and the uncertainty of the future, the coming harvest will be the worst for a generation—apart from the influence of the weather. The lack of labour for the last two years has resulted in an increasing foulness of the soil which will prove detrimental in 1917, and for many years to come." He points out that although when he wrote it was already February, the vast body which was to organise agriculture was not in working order, yet to really affect a harvest work must be started at least eighteen months ahead. It is possible to create a new army in a few months, to order and get gigantic supplies of shells at short notice, but you cannot hurry nature. If you fail to plough and prepare the land at the right time you cannot overtake your crop until the next season comes round.

Workers and Soldiers.

Lord Devonport, food controller, has urged the people to put themselves on voluntary rations, but whilst the response has been good it will certainly not be good enough to prevent the introduction of sugar, bread and meat tickets. Those who voluntary ration themselves will certainly urge that compulsory rationing be adopted, for to see others gorging whilst going hungry oneself is a most exasperating business, and one which will soon compel the adoption of forced rationing. The poor are, of course, already on short measure, for the prices of food are too high for their slender purses. Butter from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per lb., eggs 4½d. each, meat 2s. per lb., sugar 5d. per lb., and almost unobtainable, coal 50s. a ton, and fetch it yourself, tell their own tale. There is a great shortage of potatoes, and that lack is not likely to be remedied for four months or so, when the heavy crop which has been planted all over England begins to be dug. Mr. Bonar Law publicly stated that the military authorities would have to recognise that an agricultural labourer was sometimes of even greater value than a soldier, which shows that in the fight that has been going on between the War Office and the Board of Agriculture, the Government is at long last siding with the latter. It has been self-evident all along that the miner, the ship-builder, the ironworker and the agriculturist were doing work just as valuable for the maintenance of the Empire as was the man who donned khaki. To seize every able-bodied man for the army was, in the end, a foolish policy. To some extent efforts were made to exempt these workers, but apparently far too little care was exercised in securing that enough labour was left to raise the crops on which the army and the people depend for sustenance.

Home Rule Again.

The Government has announced that it intends to make yet another effort to settle the Home Rule question, but already great bitterness is being shown by the Nationalists and the Ulstermen, not by any means a happy augury for the success of the proposed attempt. If this fails it would not be at all surprising if a general election were not precipitated; a most unfortunate thing at this time. Mr. Lloyd George was given his high office to achieve definite results. How long will the people give him to get them? The Imperial War Council met in London, and every Dominion, excepting Australia, was well represented. It is exceedingly unfortunate that there should be no one to speak for the Commonwealth in the Council Chamber of the Empire. It would have been better to have deputed the High Commissioner to attend than to have had no one there at all. It is hardly possible for an Australian representative to reach London before August. Long before then the main deliberation of the Conference will have been concluded.

Federal Politics.

The Federal elections are to be held on May 5th, and the political fight in the constituencies has begun. Mr. Hughes is

to announce the Ministerialist policy at Bendigo, on March 27th, and already the Labour Party has issued its manifesto. The chief thing in this declaration is the continued uncompromising opposition to conscription which the Party will maintain. Obviously the Opposition intends to make conscription the issue, and it is difficult to see how the Hughes-Cook combination will be able to avoid it. Whether, like Mr. Holman, Mr. Hughes will publicly and definitely renounce his adherence to that principle, remains to be seen, but it is plain enough that, if the Labour men insist that the fight is really over conscription, the Fusionists, no matter how they may protest now, will feel, if they win the election, that they have, in a way, received a mandate from the people authorising them to raise men by compulsion. It is inconceivable though to expect that men like Mr. Hughes, Sir William Irvine, Mr. Watt, and most of the rank and file who last October asserted that conscription was absolutely necessary, that Australia would be disgraced if she failed to adopt it, and that they would be utterly ashamed of their country if a "No" majority were cast, can six months later repudiate all desire to bring in compulsory service, if they get the chance. For them, in April, 1917, to finally abandon a principle for which, in October, 1916, they were apparently willing to sacrifice their entire political futures, even their lives, would cause the electors to put only one construction on their actions. Naturally a good democrat is determined to abide by the decision of the people, but it would be extraordinary to find men willing to still guide the destinies of a disgraced country of which they are utterly ashamed, without making any attempt whatever to wipe away that "disgrace." Until Mr. Hughes' policy speech is available, little can be said concerning the coming struggle. He himself is standing for Bendigo, where his election is practically certain.

The New South Wales Elections.

The Holman-Liberal Fusion in N.S.W. has won the election, but returns to Parliament considerably weaker than it went to the country. In the old Parliament there were 61 Ministerialists and 29 Labour men. In the new, as far as can be judged from the incomplete returns, Mr. Holman's followers will be reduced to 56, and the Labour Party will be increased to 34. Most of those who have suffered defeat on the Ministerial side are former Labourites who were expelled from the party owing to their advocacy of conscription. Thus it comes about that the Liberal element is relatively stronger in the new Ministerial Party than it was before the election, and is is fairly apparent that Mr. Holman and his immediate supporters have been swallowed by the Liberal Party, and the old lines of cleavage in the country will speedily be much as they were before the outbreak of the war. The Labour Party endeavoured to introduce the conscription issue into the campaign, but the strenuous denials of Mr. Holman and his fellow-Ministers of any intention whatever of being parties to the compulsory raising of troops, carried, no doubt, all the more conviction in view of the fact that the Parliaments of the States have nothing whatever to do with the matter; cannot either introduce conscription or prevent its introduction. State elections are not much guide as to how the people will vote in a Federal contest. In fact, the only instructive thing is to compare the aggregate votes cast for both sides throughout the whole State. Even that does not give much clue, as it is difficult to correctly apportion the vote in uncontested constituencies or to ascertain exactly how the large independent vote should be allocated. Roughly, excluding this last and omiting the uncontested seats, the Ministerialists have a majority of 43,000 on a poll of 530,000. As apparently conscription was not at all a live issue that majority is hardly large enough to give the Federal Ministerial Party great hope of winning the Senate seats in N.S.W. The election was rather unexpected. Mr. Holman had secured permission to extend the life of Parliament, and the sudden decision to hold an election, therefore, gave the Ministerialists the advantage in preparation, as they must have been aware of the Government's intentions, whereas the Opposition, was lulled into the belief that no election would take place for some time.

Henry Stead, Clyde House, Melbourne.

HISTORY IN CARICATURE.

Oh, wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us.—*Burns.*

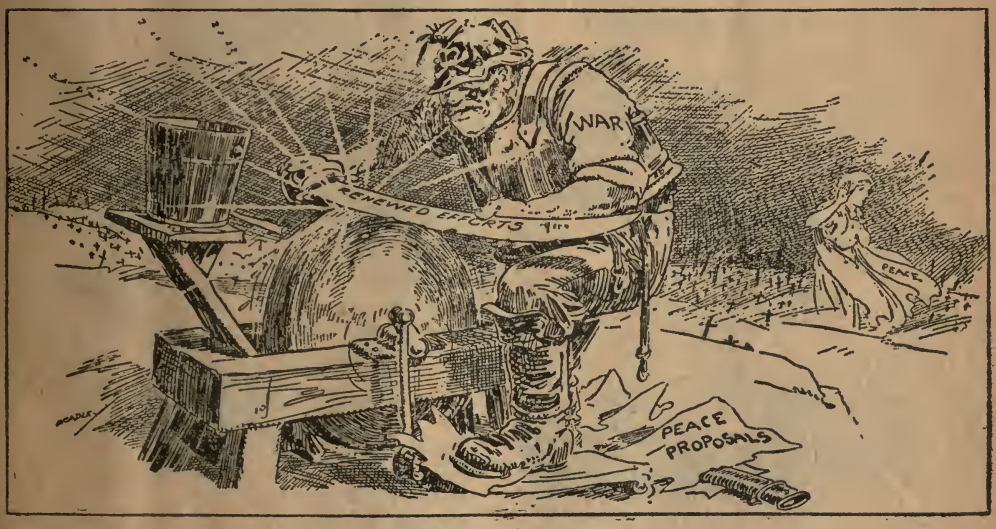
One of the finest of American cartoonists passed away when Mr. Bradley died early this year. His last drawing is reproduced on this page. Five days after completing it he passed away. It is typical of his war work, for all his recent cartoons have been noted for their anti-militaristic spirit. He abhorred war mainly because it was the sport of kings, and not a tribunal of the people. But whilst he vigorously condemned war he preserved always a scrupulous neutrality in his drawings of the great struggle.

Another powerful cartoon of his will be found on another page. In it he shows poor Peace waiting for Justice to help her bear away the body of suffering Europe. Donahey, in *The Cleveland Leader*, shows Peace and War engaged in a fatal game of chess, on the outcome of which depends the fate of the world.

Star.] [Baltimore.

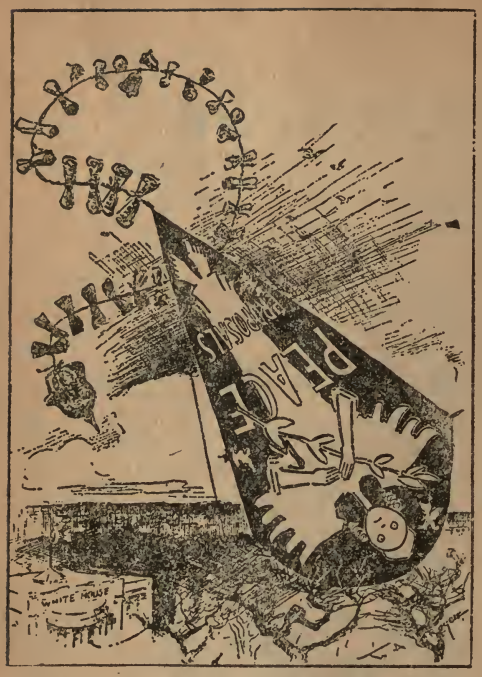
IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO FIT IT TOGETHER.

PEACE: "Now, wasn't this a nice game to wish on me?"



Daily News.] THE FINAL ANSWER? [Chicago.

This was Mr. Bradley's last cartoon.

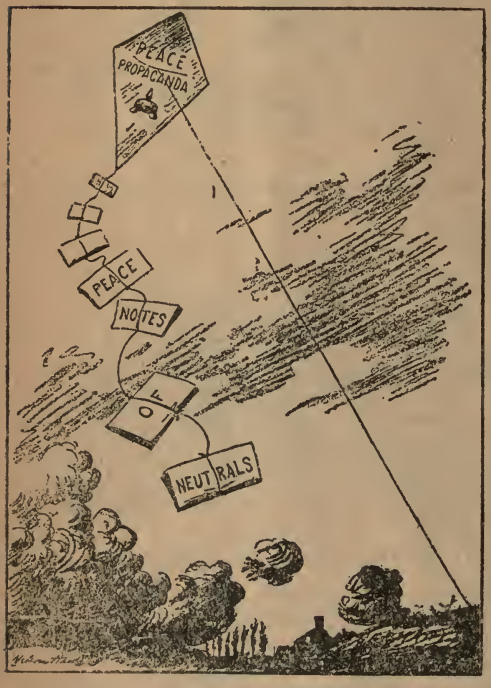


Herald.] [New York.

THE KITE THAT FAILED.

Bulletin.] [Sydney.

NOT ENOUGH TAIL.



Eagle.] [Brooklyn.

THE TAIL OF A KITE.

The Passing Show.] [London.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA: "Hi! You duffers don't know how to do it! Next time I'll fly that kite alone."

Daily News.] SHE MUST WAIT FOR HELP. [Chicago.

It is interesting to note how universally cartoonists have used the kite in connection with the Kaiser's peace proposals. Of the four reproduced on the previous page, two are American, one English, and one Australian. David Low's work is easily the most vigorous of the bunch.

The Echo de Paris evidently believes the yarn that aged Count Zeppelin was hurried to a premature grave by the failure of his airships against England.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.]
WHOSE MOVE?

Eagle.] [Brooklyn.
LOOSE AGAIN.

Echo de Paris.]
THE NIGHTMARE.
ZEPPELIN: "Oh, those wicked English, they have overcooked my sausages!"

Westminster Gazette.] L'ESPRIT DE LA FRANCE. [London.

Shades of Ste. Jeanne d'Arc and Betrand du Guesclin: "Ce n'est pas le même drapeau mais c'est la même Patrie!"

The American papers treat the Mexican mix-up with amusing candour. If the last cable be true—that telling of General Obregon joining Villa—then Carranza has been reft of his last hope, and even his barrel covering will not help him any longer.

Public Ledger.] [Philadelphia.

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE.

"It is reported that Villa has written the President, asking recognition."—News Note.

Eagle.] [Brooklyn.

ALL HE HAS LEFT.

Evening World.] [New York.
THE FRESH EGG

Post-Dispatch.] [St. Louis.
THE EGG KING.

World.] [New York.
"WE'RE READY TO TESTIFY, TOO."

The Americans being much concerned at the sudden rise in the price of food, resolved to copy the Chinese, and institute a boycott. The price of eggs having been arbitrarily pushed up to extortionate heights the housewives refused to buy them at all. The result appears to have been that the boycott blew out the food profiteers, who were hoist by their own petard.

Some of the evidence given at the enquiry into the famous "Leak," which it was asserted enabled certain people to make huge fortunes on the eve of the President's Peace Note, was of such a contradictory character, that Kirby was quite justified in his cartoon showing Ananias and Munchausen ready to go into the witness box also!

THE GREAT WHITE TSAR.

Nicholas II. Interviewed by W. T. Stead.

Seventeen years ago my father, W. T. Stead, had several interviews with the Tsar of Russia. The two first took place at Livadia, in the Crimea, that lovely spot, the private property of the Romanoffs whither, it is reported, the self-deposed Tsar has now betaken himself; the others at Tsarskoe Selo, the official residence of the Russian sovereigns, just outside Petrograd. I fortunately have the notes of these interviews with me in Australia, although I was not with my father when he visited Tsarskoe Selo six months after his trip to the Crimea, on which I accompanied him.

These four interviews were all primarily connected with the first Peace Conference which the Tsar had summoned. Father had toured round Europe interviewing Kings and Ministers, learning from them what they thought of the Rescript and when he saw the Tsar he told him the result of his investigations. But his interviews were by no means confined to the Peace Conference. In season and out of season my father had urged the establishment of better relations between Russia and England. He had been furiously attacked for his championship of "barbarous Russia" and her autocratic Tsar, Alexander III. Had been accused of being in the pay of Russia, of being a spy in her interests. But slowly and surely he had triumphed. One after the other leading men began to realise the advantages that would follow friendly relations with Russia, but, even in 1898, when the call for a Peace Conference went forth from the northern capital, there were plenty of people who roundly asserted that it was but another dodge of the Russians to get a rise out of Great Britain. How they did not pretend to know, but of the fact they were certain!

THE PEACE CRUSADE.

There was, in England at any rate, very little enthusiasm for the effort which was being made to make war less possible in the future, and, after seeing the Emperor, my father returned to England, *via* Constantinople, Vienna and Rome, seized with the need of rousing public opinion in the matter. To do that he published a weekly paper called *War Against War*, and arranged meetings all over the country urging the need for the nations getting together to limit armaments and to try and see whether some beginning could not be made to settle disputes by arbitration, instead of by the sword. He addressed two and three meetings daily for some eight weeks, and, in addition, managed to bring out the REVIEW OF REVIEWS, and write special articles for American papers, as well as keep an immense daily correspondence going. He broke down in the end, but, a few weeks later, started for Russia, taking with him a monster address to the Tsar signed by no fewer than 160,000 representative Britons. It was on this occasion that he went to Tsarskoe Selo.

NEVER PUBLISHED INTERVIEWS.

Naturally the interviews he had with the Tsar were not for publication, and much of what passed will never appear in print, but, after all these years it is, I think, permissible to tell my readers something of what was said, which, whilst betraying no confidences, yet gives some insight into the character of the man who has just abdicated, enables us to have some idea of the manner in which he viewed contemporary affairs. As I have already mentioned, although the Peace Conference was the occasion of the interviews, my father did not fail to discuss at length with the Tsar many of the questions then at issue between Russia and Britain. Years before he had had a long conversation with Alexander III., and on that occasion drew up a memorandum for his guidance in writing on Russo-British affairs of which the Emperor thoroughly approved. My father was quite frank in speaking to the old Emperor. He thus sets down the causes which led up to that interview:—

A RUSSIAN AGENT!

It was not until 1888 that I first thought it possible that I might have a good square talk with the Tsar. I was then editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and by the vigorous method in which I had championed the Russian cause during the Penjdeh dispute and afterwards, I had succeeded in establishing for myself a more or less recognised position as a "Russian organ." I was abused as a Russian agent, I was said to be in the pay of the Russian Embassy, and, in

short, I enjoyed the distinction of being pelted by all the vituperative brickbats which came handiest to those gentlemen who did me the honour to disagree with me. I need hardly say, at this time of day, that these complimentary assertions were, well—about as accurate as the majority of statements which serve as the stock-in-trade of the Russophobist. Ever since I first wielded a pen as journalist, I had been the faithful and resolute advocate of an Anglo-Russian *entente*. I got my ideas on this subject originally from Richard Cobden's political writings when I was quite a boy, and I have not departed from them a hair's-breadth since. Nevertheless, although I had never received any communication from the Russian Government, and although I had often sought in vain even the most ordinary facilities in the way of acquiring information, the British Philistine got it firmly fixed into his thick head that in some way or other I was the officious, if not the official, and inspired organ of the Tsar.

CROSS-EXAMINING AN EMPEROR.

The more I reflected upon the consequences which might follow from this absurd misconception of the actual state of things, the more necessary it seemed that I should make an effort to ascertain at first hand from the Emperor himself the general drift of his policy in all matters likely to affect the relations between the two Empires. The possibility of altogether misleading British opinion by putting forward my own ideas of Russian policy, and having them accepted instantly, despite all my disclaimers, as the authoritative expression of the views of the Russian Government, seemed to me to justify an attempt to ascertain directly from the Emperor what his policy actually was. . . . When I met Alexander III. I put the case frankly before him, pointing out the danger of having accorded to me a position to which I had no claim, and suggesting that, as I could not, despite all my disclaimers, rid myself of being his English organ, it would at least be safer if he could give me more or less definite information as to what were his ideas upon the questions which were involved in the relations between England and Russia. The Emperor thought a little, and then said he considered the suggestion reasonable. "What," he asked, "did I want to know?" "Everything," I replied, at which he smiled, and said, "Ask what questions you please, and I will answer them if I can." I availed myself of the opportunity to the full, and the Emperor was as good as his word. I asked, he answered; and by the time that the interview was over, I had received a comprehensive and definite exposition, direct from the Emperor's own lips, of the policy he intended to pursue in relation to all the questions in which England was interested.

Sir Robert Morier, our then Ambassador at St. Petersburg, speaking of this interview, said that no Russian Emperor had ever spoken so freely and fully upon all questions of foreign policy to any Englishman, and, he added, that he could not conceive of any circumstances better calculated to secure absolute candour on the part of the Tsar than those in which our interview took place.

ALEXANDER'S GUIDING POLICIES.

With the information thus obtained from the supreme head of the Russian Government my father was able to write much more authoritatively than ever before. When he met Alexander's son Nicholas II., he took this memorandum with him, and the two went over it together, altering and adding to it where needed. Although the Alexander interview took place in 1888, the Tsar then stated that he would welcome a commercial treaty with England, and was anxious that English capital and English enterprise should be more largely diverted to the Russian Empire in Europe and Asia. He said further that Russia's traditional policy had always been "nearest neighbours, fastest friends," and that therefore any misunderstanding with Germany would be regarded as a misfortune to be dispelled as speedily as possible. That Russia's friendliness with France was due to a determination to preserve the European peace, and that there was going to be no encouragement of France to attack Germany in the hope of winning back the lost provinces. That if Russia, England and Germany would but stand together, the peace of the world would be secure, and to that end the Tsar was steadily working. On the thorny question of Constantinople the Tsar Alexander asserted that Russia did not intend to take any isolated action with regard to the Ottoman Empire, but that if ever circumstances arose which forced her to take possession of Constantinople, she would certainly not tolerate a British occupation of the Dardanelles; a British occupation of some island such as Mitylene would, however, be regarded in a different light.

Father found, however, that Nicholas was anxious to go much further than Alexander in the direction of bringing about closer relations between England and Rus-

sia, and went so far as to charge him with a special mission to Queen Victoria and Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, in the matter. For their benefit my father set down the following *precis* of his conversation which he submitted to the Tsar, and of which he approved :—

1. The Emperor said that he was impatient to realise some practical result from the forthcoming Conference on Peace, and earnestly hoped for the cordial support of the English Government therein.

2. He stated very strongly that he knew of nothing in the policy, or the intentions of Russia, which conflicted with the interests of England so as to render impossible, or even difficult, the establishment of a hearty co-operative friendship between the two countries.

3. He said that, for his own part, there was nothing he so much desired as such an understanding against which nothing stood in the way but the prejudice and suspicion created by the persistent campaigning of mischief makers in the Press.

4. He remarked that he regarded the present occasion, when the co-operation of Russia and England had been happily secured with such good results, as opportune for promoting a much closer *rapprochement* between the two Governments.

5. In reply to an observation, he said that there was nothing contrary to such a *rapprochement* in his alliance with France, which was essentially pacific, and was not entered into for the purpose of disturbing the existing *status quo* on the Nile or elsewhere.

6. He went on to remark that his ideas went much beyond a mere negative abstention from policies, mutual alliance or antagonism. Their scope included an active fraternal co-operation between the two Governments for dispelling the prejudice and suspicion which, in the past, had had such regrettable results in increasing armaments, which he wished to reduce, and in precipitating the partition of China, which he abhorred.

7. He looked forward with hope and satisfaction to the prospect of establishing a good working agreement between England and Russia in China, on lines which, as he stated them, seemed to me absolutely in harmony with the declared objects of Her Majesty's Government.

8. In conclusion, he expressed his very hearty approval of several simple but obvious measures which, if they were carried out, would tend to give immediate and practical effect to his wishes for better relations. "What I want," he said, with much emphasis, "is to work for the coming of the time when, if difficulties should spring up anywhere for either England or Russia, the first thought of each should be how to help the other, and not, as, alas! it often is at present, how to hinder the other or profit by her trouble."

INTERVIEWS WITH ENGLISH KINGS.

I have with me here the notes of the interviews which my father had with Lord Salisbury, the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII.), the Duke of York (now King George V.), Mr. Balfour, and other leading men in connection with this mission, but naturally they were of an exceedingly confidential nature, and cannot even yet be published. But those who had met the Tsar talked with considerable frankness about him, and their opinion is worth having at this time. Father had a way with him which enabled him to put himself quickly on good terms with the man he interviewed, but he was always utterly unconventional, and I find in his own memoranda of one of the interviews, "Never 'Your Majestied' the Emperor all the time I was talking to him, and it has only just crossed my mind that I ought to have done so."

WHAT HIS EQUALS THOUGHT OF HIM.

Glancing through the notes of the various interviews, I find that one British notable was on terms of great intimacy with the Tsar. In reply to a question as to whether Nicholas II. was a strong man, he answered thus diplomatically, "Strong! Yes, in a sense, but I think he is rather apt to change his opinion with the last person talked to. I have often compared notes with mutual friends, and found that he inclined more to the opinion of the person he happened to be talking to than one would have expected if one had heard him talking before to the other," and went on:

The Tsar works very hard, even when visiting Denmark. When the Courier came from St. Petersburg, his whole desk was littered with despatches and papers, all of which he read and answered conscientiously. The War Office would send a great high pile of papers, the Navy the same. Great quantities regularly came from the other departments. You see, they have no Parliament or Cabinet, and everything centres upon him. He used to work away on his papers late at night. He has always been very English, and never reads any excepting English books. He has frequently told me that after Russia there is no country he

loves as much as England, and nothing he desires more than to be friends with this country. He speaks French fluently, but he speaks English better than any other language, except Russian.

THE TSAR'S LIMITATIONS.

King Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, told my father that "Nicholas II. was a charming fellow, with a very simple, natural and sweet disposition, but he never ought to have been born to the Tsardom of Russia." My father thus expressed himself concerning the Tsar after his second interview:

Nicholas II. will never be a Peter the Great. He is not a Titan, nor has he the energy of a demon. He works hard, laboriously going through all the innumerable State papers submitted to him from each of the Departments; conscientiously endeavouring to arrive at a right judgment upon each question on which he is expected to say Yea or Nay; but there is about him nothing of the Berserker fire and fury which blazed in Peter. The Emperor is a man full of generous impulses, to which it is his pleasure to give free play; but he is a modest man, and when he finds his desires thwarted by counsellors, who had grown grey before he was out of the nursery, he hesitates at sweeping them on one side. The very keenness of his intellectual sympathy tends to make him less dashing, less authoritative than he would be were his perceptions more blunted. He understands so well his own limitations, he realises so painfully day by day how impossible it is for any single human brain adequately to appreciate all the elements in the factors on which it is his hard destiny constantly to pronounce an authoritative opinion, that there is in him none of the down-thump, cut-and-thrust, bludgeon-like method of blunter-minded mortals. Hence what we may expect is that he will constantly endeavour to aim at the highest ideals both of Peace, of Liberty, and of Progress; but when, in the pursuit of these ideals, he comes up against too solid obstacles of apathy, *vis inertiae*, and ingrained prejudices in the case of his advisers and subjects, he will not risk everything in order to gain something. He will push in the right direction, though he will smash no crockery in order to attain his ends. Such, at least, is the impression I formed from what is known of his reign and of the self-revelation which he afforded me in the course of our conversation. His is a fine nature, whose failures will be chiefly due to its virtues, rather than to its faults.

GUARDIAN OF THE WORLD'S PEACE.

This disposition may qualify the Emperor better for the duties which he has undertaken as leader in the cause of Peace than had be been as masterful, say, as his near neighbour, the German Emperor. There are questions in which it is necessary not to lead but to drive; but this question of peace and war is emphatically not one for handling with a high hand. The very delicacy and modesty, the reserve and the shrinking from violent expressions of self-will, which more or less impede the progress of necessary reforms in the internal administration, may be the best qualifications for success in an attempt to induce the nations to agree to some method of settling disputes other than by war. His impatient desire to get something done, and his utter indifference to what it is, so long as it is something practical and something that can be carried into effect at once, are very characteristic of the man. He is no pedant, he has no cut-and-dried scheme for inaugurating a millennium. What he sees clearly is the drift to the abyss. What he longs for most is that something should be done, and that at once, in order to arrest that drift. Further than that he does not go. He has strong humanitarian prejudices against the use of explosive bullets, and all the later manifestations of scientific devilry in the art of war. His grandfather before him succeeded in inducing Europe to put a veto upon explosive rifle bullets, and he would be very glad to carry the same principle a step further and abolish the use of the Dum Dum and other such bullets, which seem to him needless aggravations of the horrors of war; but he has no preconceived prescription drawn up to impose upon the Conference, He would probably say, if he were asked, that because he took the initiative in asking the Powers to meet together to discuss what could be done, that is no reason why he should be expected to provide them with a panacea for the evils which they all admit and deplore, but individually are powerless to remove. He has no exclusive right of initiative in the Conference which he has summoned.

"MY FAVOURITE COUSIN."

Of the Emperor's disposition, all those who know him best speak in the highest possible terms. Her Majesty (Queen Victoria) who has known him from his boyhood, entertains for him an intense feeling of personal affection, such as one might have for a favourite grandchild. His public appearances in this country have been so very few

that it is difficult to form any estimate upon what we have seen or heard of him. He is very quick in the up-take, discerning with rapid intuition the drift of what is being said to him. He is methodical in his ways, and prefers to have the *pros* and *cons* of any question submitted to him drawn up in clear and brief terms. He is a devoted husband, and has the faculty of winning and retaining friendships. "Of all my cousins," said the Duke of York (King George) to me recently, "I think he is my favourite and you know," said the Duke with a smile, "I have a great many cousins." His personal charm arises, no doubt, largely from the fact that he is so natural and so frank, so simple, and yet so full of humour, and human sympathy. It would no doubt be easier for him to bear the burden which the Destinies have placed upon shoulders were he a little harder, and if he felt a little less keenly the miseries with which, with all his power, he is impotent to deal. It is, however, a great thing that a man in his position should be bowed down rather by the consciousness of his own imperfections than puffed up by the pride of his power, and it is difficult to imagine anything better for the world than that one in whose hands there is placed over one hundred and twenty-nine millions of people should be so conscious of the need of improving their condition as to feel impatient wrath at the suggestion that he should waste his resources in seizing territory which would add still more to the weight which, like Atlas, he has to support.

THE COMMONS' KING.

Ten years ago, when I was at St. Petersburg, I had the privilege of seeing a good deal of Mr. Heath, the English tutor of the present Emperor.. There was no man in Russia of whom Sir Robert Morier—no mean judge of character—had a higher opinion. He was an English gentleman in the best sense of the word, simple, unaffected, frank, straightforward and manly. I remember his telling me an anecdote of his pupil which made a very pleasant impression on my mind at the time.

They were reading together "The Lady of the Lake," and they came to that spirited stanza which describes the scene in Stirling, when the castle gates were flung open and King James rode down the steep descent, while the crowd rent the heavens with their acclaims:

"Long live the Commons' King, King James!"

"'The Commons'' King!" exclaimed the boy with sparkling eyes—"that is what I should like to be!"

"But every Russian Tsar is the Commons' King," exclaimed a patriotic Russian, to whom I told the story. It may be so, no doubt, in theory, but a good deal depends upon the application. And Nicholas II. is penetrated through and through with the passionate of sympathy with the poor which is so distinctive a note of our time.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

Nicholas II. in stature does not resemble his father, who was a son of Anak. It is a mistake, however, to speak of him as if he were exceptionally slight. He is about the same height as General Gordon, whom he resembles in other things besides the number of his inches. When he rides or sits, the Emperor seems as tall as most men. When he stands, he is a little taller than Lord Nelson or Napoleon Bonaparte. Good stuff, says the old adage, is often put up in little bundles, and the giant in popular legend is usually as dull as he is huge. In physique the Emperor is wiry and vigorous. One who sees him every day told me that physically Nicholas is a much healthier man than his father. Alexander III., although great in stature and with immense muscular development, was, from the insurance company's point of view, by no means so "good a life" as his successor. The Tsar is full of vitality, quick and active in his movements, fond of outdoor exercise. Certainly no one meeting him for the first time would put him down among the weakly.

QUICK AS A NEEDLE.

The first and most conspicuous characteristic of Alexander III. was the solidity—it would be wrong to call it the stolidity—of his mental temperament. He was by no means dull. But he was slow. He put his foot down like an elephant, and when he put it down, he was not quick to take it up again. The characteristic of his son and successor is quite different. The note of his intellectual temperament is that of extreme alertness. As he is also extremely sympathetic this makes him one of the most charming persons to talk to I have ever met. The two qualities were also united in General Gordon, whose nimbleness of mind was so excessive that it was somewhat difficult to keep up with him. If, in talking to the late Tsar, you were at a loss for a word, or an illustration, he patiently waited until you found it. His son, on the other hand, would divine your meaning, and help you out. He

is as quick as a needle, and quite as bright. Speaking of one of Her Majesty's ambassadors the other day, I tried to explain his excessive slowness in the uptake by saying that the only way to get an idea into his head was to take a hammer and drive it in like a tenpenny nail. This is the very antithesis of Nicholas II. I have seldom met anyone so quick to seize a point. Whatever he may fail in, it will not be lack of capacity to see and understand.

COMPLETE ABSENCE OF PRIGGISHNESS.

This exceptional rapidity of conception is united with a remarkable memory and a very wide grasp of an immense range of facts. I know some eminent English politicians holding high office who in this respect are a mournful contrast to the Emperor. When questioned even about the affairs of their own department, their fingers seem to be all thumbs. They have not got their dates right, or they are vague and misty about the exact drift of important negotiations. There are plenty of such woolly-minded men in high places, and it is a real pleasure to meet any one who has his facts at his finger-ends, who tells you in a flash what was done or what was not done, and whose ideas, be they right or wrong, are lucidly expressed in a very definite form. Alertness, exactness, lucidity and definiteness are four excellent qualities in a man, and the Emperor has them all. With all this, there is an absolute absence of anything even distantly approaching the priggishness of such a superior person as the new Viceroy of India (Lord Curzon).

TOO READY TO GIVE WAY.

Many years ago Mr. Gladstone described the Emperor as a charming type of the best of our public schoolboys. He was frank, fearless, perfectly natural, and simplicity itself. Nicholas II. is no longer a boy. He has borne for several trying years the burden of one of the greatest Empires in the world. But he is still as absolutely simple and unaffected as he was when Mr. Gladstone met him in Copenhagen fifteen years ago. There is still in him all the delightful schoolboy abandon of manner, a keen sense of humour and a hearty outspoken frankness in expressing his opinions which make you feel that you are dealing with a man whose character is as transparent as crystal. Add to all this a modesty as admirable as it is rare, and it must be admitted that even if the net human product should fall short of being a great ruler, he has at least all the qualities which make men beloved by their fellows. The bright, clear blue eye, the quick, sympathetic change of feature, the merry laugh, succeeded in a moment by an expression of noble gravity and of high resolve, the rapidity and grace of his movements, even his curious little expressive shrugs of the shoulders, are all glimpses of a character not often found unspoiled by power. Those who know him best appear to love him most, and, naturally enough, each one thinks his own fault is that he is too ready to sacrifice his own convenience and his own wishes to oblige others.

A DISSERTATION ON CIVILISATION.

The first interview at Livadia was rather desultory, but, during the second, all manner of matters were closely discussed concerning the foreign policy of Russia, and especially where this clashed with that of Britain. The first talk lasted an hour and a-quarter, and the second rather longer. Amongst other things discussed on the first occasion was the Chinese question, at that time a burning one between England and Russia. It was carried on in this fashion:

I said, "The white men are divided into hostile groups, each against the other, so weighted down by armaments that you have issued the rescript to summon the Powers to see if nothing can be done to arrest this prodigious weight under which they groan. The yellow men, on the other hand, are different altogether, without conscription, without soldiers, without ironclads."

"Yes," he broke in, "and have been doing so for a thousand years."

"Yes," I said, "and because those yellow men are unarmed, the white man at the very time when deploring the armaments from which he himself is suffering, is seizing their territory, and compelling them to become soldiers, and so is reproducing in the yellow world the very evils against which you are protesting here."

"Quite true," he said, "but I am sure you must take wider views of the whole subject. It is deplorable but inevitable in the advance of civilisation." Then he suddenly broke out in a little speech. "I don't love it, this civilisation. We are now at the end of the century, and I look at this civilisation, and I do not find it good. As for the colonial policy, what does it mean for the native? Opium, strong drink, loathsome diseases. And at home—great armaments, a state of society in which a few at the top are very wealthy, but the condition of the labouring man is very bad, and leaves much to be desired. We have socialism growing and developing often into anarchism, the

luxury above and the misery below make things burst up from beneath. There is also the dying away of religious faith?" Here he stopped, smiled, and said, "I must beg your pardon, but here we have one of the worst evils—the press."

"But I quite agree with you," I said, "much of the press is diabolical, but what can be done? If those who labour for peace were to lay down their pens, then the mischief-makers would have the place to themselves."

"Yes, I know," he replied, "but the press has conducted a veritable campaign against good relations between England and Russia. It inflames misunderstandings. Almost all the trouble we have had during the last year has been the direct work of the press."

"You remind me," I said, "of what General Schwernitz told me ten years ago. He said, You want to know how to secure peace. I can tell you at once. Give me leave to hang a dozen editors, and we would have no more war."

"There is much truth in that," said the Emperor, smiling. "I do not know what has come over the press recently. I hardly recognise *The Times* for the last two years. McKenzie Wallace is a very clever man. I had a long talk with him some years ago, but I do not know whether he loves Russia or not."

"No," I said, "I never heard of Wallace loving man, woman or child, let alone a country."

"Perhaps it is all in the head and none in the heart," said the Tsar. "He promised me that he would do all that he could to allay misunderstandings, and flatten out difficulties between England and Russia, and I told him he could not render me a greater service."

"With regard to what you said about civilisation," I went on, "there is at least one ray of light which is being shed upon the present gloomy situation—that is your Peace Rescript. It has brought fresh hope to a weary world."

"I hope so," he said, with animation, "but even here, how things have been misrepresented. I do not say that it was issued from purely humanitarian motives; it is also economical, was promoted by self-interest as well as for the general welfare. Russia needs relief, I admit that frankly, but her position is by no means such that she could not carry on if this evil system is to be continued. It is not only Russia who suffers, all the other nations are in the same plight. We all suffer; then why not be honestly resolved that we will join together to stop it? That was my idea. The Rescript has been misunderstood. What I proposed was not universal disarmament. What I desired was that a stop should be put at once to the increase of armaments, and I want to see a resolution that there should be no more new destructive weapons, which are now being invented every day. I want to see prevented the introduction of the new automatic gun, of new and more deadly explosives, and also I should like to see mines, and all such methods for the destruction of mankind stopped, as they are much worse than the explosive bullets, which were interdicted at the Conference my grandfather summoned."

DISCUSSING RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY.

Two days later, though, my father went prepared with a memorandum setting forth the various points on which he wished to know Russia's intentions, and the two went over them *seriatim*. The memorandum covered most things beginning with the Russo-French Alliance, and ending with the rumoured intention of the Russian Government to seize a coaling station in the Red Sea, touching amongst other things on the Chino-Japanese war, and the Russian attitude in the Far East, on the massacres of the Armenians, the state of Poland, the war between the Turks and the Greeks, and the intervention in Crete, the German seizure of Kiau-Chau, the Russian occupation of Port Arthur and Talienwan, and the British occupation of Wei-Hai-Wei, the British recapture of Khartoum, and the Fashoda incident—we were on the eve of war with France in 1898, it will be remembered, and the Fashoda affair had assumed great importance—Constantinople, and the Balkan question.

TSAR DISCUSSES INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

It is impossible, of course, to set down all the matters which came up for consideration at that interview, but one or two of them are of considerable interest to-day. Tsar Nicholas, having looked over the instructions which my father had received from Tsar Alexander, stated that he strongly approved of them all, but he was especially concerned with the methods which should be adopted to preserve peace in Europe. His father had stated that if Russia, Germany and England stood together, the peace of the world was secured. He, however, said impetuously, "If only Russia and England would hold together they would always keep the world at peace."

Mr. Morley told my father when the Tsar came to the throne, "Here am I, a mature man, with only six millions to manage—he was Irish Secretary at the time—and I find it hard enough, but what must that young man of twenty-five feel, upon whose shoulders press the burden of 130 millions?"

"Yes," said the Tsar, "it is a burden greater than I would care to inflict upon my worst enemy."

"Ah, well," I said, "but the post of honour is the post of duty."

"Yes, yes," he broke in eagerly, "it is duty that buoys one up. It is duty that enables one to drive through."

The two discussed what had been done since the Tsar came to the throne, and my father made reference to the Emperor of Germany. The Tsar broke in, "I do not want to be like the Emperor of Germany. When he came to the throne he began altogether too boisterously for me."

"I take it," said my father, "that the policy of Russia in the Far East is to avoid any alteration, territorial or political, of the *status quo*, which might entail the partition of China, and the consequent unwished-for assumption of new responsibilities and new annexations by Russia."

"Yes," he said, "that is my policy, and, with sudden vehemence, "I dread the possibility of the break-up of China."

When they came to the question of Armenia, my father said, "I feel that this is a subject on which we are not in accord. It is the only time in which I have found myself unable to support Russia, which has permitted the massacre of the Armenians without lifting a finger to help them. I quite understand that Lord Salisbury is also to blame owing to the distrust which he has excited in Russia with regard to our policy concerning Turkey."

"Yes," said the Tsar, "that is quite true. He is very much distrusted in Russia, and this mutual distrust is at the bottom of the policy with regard to Armenia."

"You do not suggest," said the Tsar, "that Russia should have plunged into another war with Turkey in order to settle the Armenian question?"

"Had there been loyal co-operation between Russia and England there would have been no need to go to war with Turkey to enforce better treatment of the Armenians," said my father.

"With regard to the German seizure of Kiau Chau," my father said, "from the German point of view that was a great mistake, as in the event of war between Germany and England that would be one of the first places to fall into our hands. It is a mere hostage to fortune."

With this the Tsar agreed, but he evidently thought that the Kaiser had been guilty of very sharp practice in obtaining Russian consent to the German occupation of that place, when the most that had been agreed to was that Germany should be allowed to enforce reparation for the murdered missionaries. As far as the seizure of Talienwan by Russia was concerned, the Tsar stated that it was a long time before he decided to do it, and it had been the cause of very grave anxiety. It was due, however, to the German seizure of Kiau Chau and the British occupation of Wei-Hai-Wei.

"It is asserted," said my father, "that Russia proposes to convert Abyssinia into an African Montenegro."

"Why should we mix ourselves up with these people? It is all because I sent Leontieff, but we have not the slightest intention of mixing in African matters."

With regard to China, the Tsar reasserted his desire to preserve the political unity of that country, and his anxiety to prevent the further leasing or partition of territory there which would lead to the extension of the armed system which cursed the white world, to the yellow race.

With regard to mutual trade conditions in the ports which had been seized by the three Powers, the Tsar stated that agreement in the matter had practically been reached between Great Britain and Russia.

So far as the Near East was concerned, he said that Russia was opposed to anything that would tend to dislocate the peace of the Balkans, and specially objected to the leasing or cession of any portions of Turkish territory to any European Power. He was, however, in favour of the union of Crete with Greece, and with the declaration of Bulgaria's independence. (At that time Bulgaria was nominally under the control of Turkey.)

My father pointed out that there had been a supplementary naval programme laid down by Russia which involved the expenditure of £13,000,000.

"If the Peace Conference accepts the proposal for a stay of further increase of armaments," said the Tsar, "nothing will be done to carry out that extra programme."

They even discussed the Russian attitude towards Austria-Hungary in the event of the sudden death of the Emperor Franz Joseph, in the frankest manner. The Tsar strongly approved of the suggestion that in

order to promote friendly relations between England and Russia the British Fleet would come to Kronstadt, and the Russian Fleet go to Portsmouth on mutual visits, but he was particularly anxious that in the Ottoman Empire Russia and England should act together in order to secure for the subject races there the minimum guarantees of life and liberty promised them by the Treaty of Berlin, and he reiterated his previous assertion that the trouble there was caused by the mistrust the two Powers had of each other, which enabled the Sultan to continue persecuting the Armenians and other races without let or hindrance.

A FRIGHTFUL BURDEN.

Even yet the views of the late Tsar on many very important questions cannot be divulged, but it is interesting to note, in the above summary, how thoroughly Nicholas II. desired to secure permanent peace in Europe, how anxious he was to bring about better relations between Russia and England. Now that he has fallen from power, is no longer the autocratic ruler of all the Russias, there are not found wanting those who assert that Nicholas II. was the enemy of his country, a pro-German, a man who is largely responsible for the parlous state into which the Empire has got since the war began. They easily forget that for twenty-two years this man has borne the almost insufferable weight of ruling 160,000,000 people, a burden he himself told my father he could not wish his worst enemy to have taken up.

ABDICATE TO HELP HIS PEOPLE.

He has undoubtedly laboured conscientiously, strenuously, for the people he rules over; has tried, to the limit of his power, to govern justly and well, but he happens to have been Tsar at a time of awakening, when the people stirred and demanded a more democratic government, insisted on the abolition of many of the age-old institutions which bound them down. Nicholas II. was not strong enough to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, Alexander II., who liberated the serfs, and paid for his liberal ideas by his assassination at the hands of the bureaucrats! He could not break through the network of antiquated administration which hemmed him in, but he did not hesitate to eliminate himself in the end, hoping, by that means, to enable his people to win what they so earnestly desired.

A FALLEN MONARCH HAS NO FRIENDS.

During his long reign Russia has advanced greatly, and not a little of the improvement can be traced back to the Tsar. He it was who summoned the Peace Conferences, which it is the foolish habit of the man-in-the-street to scoff at nowadays, but which, nevertheless, marked a distinct advance on the road towards the final abolition of war, set up machinery which has been already advantageously used in the settlement of disputes, made laws which have, on the whole, been well observed by all the combatants. Then the Duma came into existence during his reign, and, although it may have been forced upon the Government, the Tsar himself appears, in the end, to have smoothed the way for its creation. The *rapprochement* with England was undoubtedly largely of his making. At one time such a drawing together was regarded as quite hopeless, and was strongly opposed in England. Now everyone is convinced that it was of the very first importance that Russia and England should come closer together. Instances of his solicitude for his people could be multiplied, but the comments of the press and of public men well prove the old adage that a fallen monarch has no friends.

NEVER LOST COURAGE.

Nicholas II. thus spoke of the manner in which he felt himself hemmed in and surrounded by the forces of reaction. The occasion was at Tsarskoe Selo, when my father told him about the doings of Mons. Mouravieff, who, as chief censor, had prohibited the entrance into Russia of my father's book, "The United States of Europe," which volume his brother, the Foreign Minister, had written to say was most useful to Russia, and he hoped would be widely read. The Tsar himself was much pleased with it, and, when he heard it had been suppressed in Russia almost refused to believe it.

"Here is the book," I said, "and when I sent a copy through the post, even to M. Basily, the censor seizes it, and M. Basily has never received it at all."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed the Emperor.

"Nonsense," said I. "Just imagine it. It is so absurd I can hardly think of it without laughing. Here is a book which the Foreign Minister declares is most useful to Russia, sent through the post to the head of the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Office, and the censor, who is Count Mouravieff's brother, seizes it and refuses to even let M. Basily have it to read."

"It is really preposterous," said the Tsar. "Of course I don't doubt your word, but that such a thing should happen is hardly credible."

I said, "This is not a bad illustration of what I find everywhere in Russia. I meet you here and find you an intelligent, liberal Christian gentleman, a man of the nineteenth century, and around you is a whole network of institutions and administrations which are hundreds of years old. I think it must sometimes nearly drive you crazy. You must be nearly worried to death with all these stupidities and the opposition and absurdities of your administration."

"It is most trying," he burst out; "it is more than I can bear almost. . . ."

"As I look at you," I went on, "I feel somewhat awed when I think that the only hope of getting rid of these stupidities and all these absurdities, whether in the Universities or in Finland or anywhere else, all lies in you. I look over the whole of Russia, and always it comes back to you. I only hope that God, Who has put so much on your shoulders, will give you strength to bear it all."

"I hope so," he said, "and I have never lost courage. Things are difficult, but I have never yielded to fear."

GERMANY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

An exceedingly interesting series of articles on economic conditions in Germany is being contributed to *The Scientific American* by Albert K. Dawson, who spent several months in Germany studying the condition of the people behind the firing lines. His first paper deals with the problem of feeding, clothing and guarding 3,000,000 prisoners of war. He says:—

This means more than the population of Victoria and New South Wales combined. It also means more men to feed, clothe, guard, and care for than are found in the entire Dominion of Canada. Add to this the fact that they are not all of one race or language, but represent every race from the Equator to the Arctic and speak every language in current use to-day. Complicate this still further by having them of different religious beliefs and you will get some idea of Germany's problem of what to do with her prisoners of war.

The Russian prisoners are the largest single group, and have proved themselves the most tractable of prisoners. Accustomed to plain food and hard work, they do not grumble, and may be counted rather as an asset than as a liability to Germany, for they are doing most of her farm work at present.

Without this Russian labour Germany could never have harvested her crops this year. They are sent out in parties of twenty-five or thirty to each village with one guard to look after them. They live with the villagers and seem to get on very well. Many of them have already married German peasant girls and it is said that fully half a million of them will remain permanently in Germany when the war is over. Next in number come the Frenchmen, always good natured and smiling and according to the German authorities the easiest prisoners to handle. Among them are found skilled labourers, mechanics and professional men but not so many farmers.

In the camps Mr. Dawson found Mongolians, Malays, Cossacks, Hindoos, Sikhs, Sengalese, Ghurkas, Arabs, Hottentots, Mohammedans, Indo-Chinese and practically every other race in the world. Some of the prisoners are exceeding particular about their diet, and many do not agree well together. In all they prove an unwelcome addition to the prison problem the Germans have to solve.

Under international law a prisoner of war cannot be obliged to work; but there is nothing to prevent his captor from inducing him to work by a reward of some sort. Thus we find thousands of French and English working in the shops and factories of Germany; as much, perhaps, to escape the ennui of prison life as for the small pay and tobacco allowance they receive. They are very careful not to work on any product which could be used as a material of war. Thus we find them building highways and public works, working in book binderies, factories making agricultural instruments, furniture and toys, and establishments making women's clothing and shoes; but never making anything which could be used or worn by the men in the field.

There remain, though, says Mr. Dawson, hundreds of thousands of prisoners who will not work at all. These are confined in prison camps all over Germany. The system of housing has been standardised, and, as a general rule, the camps are situated on gravel soil to insure good drainage. The barrack buildings are of one design, built of wood, with tar paper roofs and plenty of windows. These are heated by stoves, and, as a rule, have electric light.

Running water for washing and drinking is supplied each barrack and there is always a common bath house and laundry for the entire camp. This has shower baths, tubs and hot water, and the men can go at any time to bathe and wash their clothes. The

prisoners are obliged to take at least one bath a week, but this rule does not have to be enforced on the English and French; they wash as a matter of course. It is only the Russians and Orientals who must be lined up once a week, much against their will, for the Saturday bath. The Russian peasant can see no sense of bathing at any time, and the idea of letting quantities of water come in contact with his skin in winter time is simply suicidal to him. A company of Russians being marched to the bath house under guard on a winter day is always a source of fun to the English and French, because, judging by their expressions, one would think they were going out to be shot instead of washed.

Directly he reaches a camp a prisoner is given a number, which is painted or sewed on his clothing. The Germans give the non-commissioned officers among the prisoners authority over the men and make them responsible. This system makes it possible for the Germans to handle a large number of prisoners with a comparatively small number of guards. In each camp there is a large tent or empty barrack room set aside as a church, where services are held each Sunday by the prisoners themselves.

The food question is the one thing uppermost in the mind of every prisoner and in his opinion cannot be given too much space in any discussion. It is also the one problem which gives the Germans most concern. One of the officers in charge of prisoner food supplies of the empire told me that sometimes it appeared as if the Russians were sending their men over in prisoners in such great numbers in order that they might eat the Germans out of house and home.

It is the aim of the Germans to see that every prisoner receives enough well-cooked wholesome food to keep him in first-class physical condition. This is a long way, however, from giving him all he wants of the kind he wants and at the time he wants it. Naturally the Germans cannot maintain an a la carte service and cook to suit each individual or national appetite. They figure out a well-balanced nutritious ration for the mass, just as we would figure out a ration for a horse, and the men can either take it or leave it. In all the prisons I visited I never saw a man who looked half nourished or under fed; but the same men often complained that they were being starved. In no case did their appearance bear out the statements.

Speaking of national appetites, we find that what would suit the Senegal does not please the Cossack, and vice versa. The Russian peasant likes salt herring as we like turkey, but the Frenchmen abhor it. The Mohammedan will starve before he will eat pork and the Hindoo will starve before he will eat beef. Everybody likes coffee except the Englishman and he wants tea. Some of them like a little garlic in everything and some of them don't; and there you are.

There is a canteen or store in each camp, where the ordinary rations can be supplemented, and some of the prisons—usually those with many English in them—have restaurants where the men can take all their meals if they have the money to pay for them.

Next in importance to the food question to the prisoner is the mail from home. From what I could find the postal system is very well organised. Very few had missed a letter or package and money always came through without loss or delay. I was surprised to find that the Russians received more money from home than those of any other nationality. Probably because they are numerically so much in the majority. Next to them come the English who receive the largest per capita amount.

The prisoners are allowed to receive letters, money and packages, and may write two letters a week. The number of pages is, however, limited to two, a necessary measure, as the prison censor soon found that the persual of the missives of men with a literary turn of mind delayed the correspondence of all the other men.

Taking all things into consideration I believe that the men are much better off in prison than they would be if in the field with their various armies, going through the usual campaign hardships; and I know of my own experience that there have been many times while on the front that I would have gladly excepted a bowl of the prison soup.

A PEST A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.

The ravages of the boll weevil have recently been causing immense disturbance in the cotton growing districts of the United States. The little beast, a moth in later life, was a pest confined at one time to Egypt, but since he arrived in America he has been so busy that the cotton growers were in despair, and large areas went out of cotton cultivation altogether. It appears, though, that the weevil is actually going to turn out a blessing in disguise. This disguise was indeed so good that it has taken some time to penetrate it, but already it is redeeming the Southern States from the disgrace of being a one-crop country. Cotton is no longer autocratic there. It has been dethroned by the boll weevil, and must now take its place as merely one in a

democracy of crops. The despairing cotton growers and cotton-seed millers have found salvation in the humble peanut!

Mr. F. S. Tisdale gives in *The Nation's Business* an account of the rapid manner in which the cultivation of this ground nut has been taken up all over the South. In 1908 the value of the peanuts grown in the Southern States was £2,500,000. The value of the 1916 crop, at a conservative estimate, was £11,000,000. In Texas alone 200,000 acres are laid down in peanuts. A few years ago these nuts were consumed, for the most part, by boys and girls all over the States. Everyone who has travelled there is familiar with the peanut barrows at the street corners, with the steam whistling through the kettle spout; but even the millions of children of the States would make little impression on the millions and millions of bushels now being grown in the fields where once the cotton-bush flourished.

A few years ago the value of the cocoanut as food was little realised. To-day it is known to be one of the most important nutritive things nature produces in the world. The demand is therefore enormous, but it takes seven years, or more, for a cocoanut tree to begin bearing, whereas the peanut is an annual, and the return is immediate. It may well be that this insignificant little plant may soon fill as important a place in the world's kitchen as does the cocoanut palm.

It is of higher food value even than wheat, and the oil which is extracted therefrom is a better lard substitute than cotton-seed oil. This oil brings a higher price per gallon, too, and the chief cause of the rapid development of peanut culture is because the oil can be won in the very same mills by the very same machinery that is used for the extraction of the oil from the cotton seeds. Unlike the cotton bush, though, the peanut greatly benefits the soil. Mr. Tisdale states:—

> In addition to the direct profits, the peanuts leave the land better off than when they were planted. For, like many of their cousins in the bean family, they gather and deposit nitrogen in the soil. All of which was mighty nice for the farmer—but it didn't help the mill men face their famine of cottonseed.
>
> "Well," said the farmers, "why don't you crush our peanuts?"
>
> The mill men laughed at first. Then they began to investigate, and the things they discovered about the peanut took the smiles from their faces. In 1914, the United States imported 44,549,789 pounds of nuts and 1,332,108 gallons of peanut-oil from Marseilles, Delft, Hamburg, and other ports. The nuts brought 1,899,237 dollars, and the oil, which was valued at 915,039 dollars, went mostly into the manufacture of butterine and other lard substitutes. The war killed this trade deader than a door-nail, but the demand for it was open-mouthed and hungry as a nest full of jay-birds.
>
> By slight readjustments of their machinery that cost very little, the cottonseed plants could be turned into peanut-oil plants as they stood. The superiority of peanut-oil over the old product was emphasized by the willingness of the trade to pay sixty-seven cents for a gallon of peanut-oil when they would pay about sixty-five cents for the same measure of cottonseed-oil. On the strength of these things the mill men experimented cautiously with peanuts.
>
> The results were so successful that the acreage in Texas increased more then 1000 per cent. from 1915 to 1916. Fully three-quarters of the vast country of Comanche were taken from cotton and given over to the goober. History was repeating itself in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and in the other cotton States. In Georgia, Calhoun, and Randolph counties had been cotton-fields. The boll-weevil regarded these fair acres and acted as if they had been planted for his especial benefit.
>
> "Peanuts," murmured the Calhoun and Randolph men in their sorrow.
>
> They are shouting the word now at the top of their voices. Their lands are turned into peanut plantations. They have built mills and warehouses at Coleman, Arlington, and Edison to take care of the yield from 15,000 acres. Cotton-oil mills throughout the South are making the necessary changes in their machinery and are preaching the renaissance of the goober to the planters about them.
>
> At Houston, Tex., three large mills have taken up the manufacture of peanut-oil and cake. They and others about the State have guaranteed a ready market for the entire Texas crop, and the outlook for next year is for a far greater acreage than this year. . . . . .
>
> So surprising has been the success of the experiments that the planters have begun to look for the dark side of the silver lining. The price of peanut products has gone up with all its companion foodstuffs—will it come crashing down at the end of the war? How much danger is there from over-production?

There is little chance of that, however, because the food value of peanut oil and cake is so great that there will always be a universal market for it. But the despised earth nut has other advantages.

The South abounds in sandy soil that will produce little cotton or grain. If the peanut could submit specifications it would ask for just such soil. Vast tracks where pine forests have stood may be made useful and valuable by planting them with peanuts.

The cottonseed mills have a capacity far beyond the available supply of their raw material, and have, therefore, lain with cold furnaces for a large part of the year. They

will naturally welcome a new industry that will extend the yearly period of operation and at the same time extend the figures on the credit side of the ledger.

If peanut raising is proving of such immense profit to American farmers, why should it be despised of the Australian? What about our waste spaces? Could we not further help in the housekeeping of the world by adding these nuts to our crops? Could we not, indeed, start an industry in the Commonwealth which would add further to our wealth, employ large numbers of the immigrants who are certain soon to come to our shores to avoid the crushing taxation in Europe?

JOFFRE THE MAN.

Mr. Charles Dawbarn contributes an illuminating little sketch of Marshal Joffre to *The English Review of Reviews*. Amongst other things he says:—

Order, method and persistency are the key-notes of Joffre's success. He is not the dashing soldier, either in appearance or in his plan of campaign. There is nothing romantic-looking about him, but something eminently strong and sensible. He is a man of the people who has risen by sheer merit and industry to his present position. Joffre is said to disdain chance and to be incredulous about sudden flashes of inspiration. He thinks that war belongs to science and is to be scientifically conducted. His idea is to prepare everything, to leave nothing to chance. Every detail is studied, every point is made clear.

When by a vote of the War Council he was appointed to the supreme command in 1911, people outside the army knew him not at all, and many inside the army only remembered vaguely that he was the leader of a successful expedition which years before, in 1894, had entered Timbuctoo, after a most difficult march in the desert. He had fought the Tuaregs and punished them for their treachery, and had opened up a large tract of territory. Thus fame of a restricted sort had come to him at the age of 42. For the most part his life has been spent away from the routine of the army in bridge and road making, fortifications and the rest. As a colonel he spent some time in Madagascar constructing naval defences at Diego Suarez,

This sort of work seems to have developed the solitary bent of Joffre's mind. He was always rather a lonely figure, just as was Kitchener, surveying mankind with a kindly, though somewhat detached vision, from his mountain top. To adopt the Colonial career, as he did, meant that he would be lonely, removed, at least, from the barrack square. But that way promotion and personal distinction lie. His reason for going first abroad was the touching one of his young wife's death. Joffre was profoundly saddened by it; life seemed to have lost its savour. But his was not the nature to brood even over deep personal grief, and he flung himself into work under Courbet, in the island of Formosa, just at the moment when the great French sailor coloniser was undertaking his celebrated Tonking campaign. And in the activity of those years he felt a growing zest in life and a strengthening of all the fibres of his being. In Indo-China, at Hanoi, where he organised an expedition, as if to prove his versatility, he made a great impression, not merely upon his chiefs, but upon the natives as well. When he left they named a street after the young and thoughtful-looking captain who seemed always to be meditating behind the broad forehead and the unforgettable eyes; for they are unforgettable in their blueness and their seeming power to read the soul.

The Catalans who inhabit Rivesaltes in the Eastern Pyrenees, within a mile or two of the blue Mediterranean, and in the midst of a great expanse of shallow lakes formed by the overflow from the sea, are a race apart. They are not strictly French, nor are they typically Spanish. They are Catalan and that is sufficient, and they talk their own language and even have newspapers printed in it. They are proud, industrious and sober, and Joffre partakes of their character with the addition of the cool shrewdness of a Picardy great-grandfather. The amalgam is extraordinarily effective and calculated to wear well.

Some people have sought to attach the French Commander-in-Chief to Spain, just as the Swiss newspapers at the commencement of the war spoke of him as a Protestant of Helvetian descent. But local enquiries have established the falsity of both pretensions. Joffre is a pure Catalan from Rivesaltes—that is, if one will allow him the great-grandfather from Picardy—and his family goes back to the seventeenth century, if not to the fifteenth.

CATECHISM OF THE WAR—XXXVIII

Q.—Could you give me any idea of the increased carrying capacity of British merchant ships owing to the sanctioning of deck loads?

A.—Some shipping experts assert that by deck loading, and the permission given to load ships down to the "Indian Summer" Plimsoll mark, no less than 500,000 tons was in effect added to the British mercantile marine.

Q.—Did the recent restrictions on the brewing of beer in England really save much barley?

A.—According to Lord Devonport the new regulations, which reduce the output of beer to 50 per cent. of the pre-war total, saves 286,000 tons of barley, 36,000 tons of sugar, and 16,500 tons of grits. It is really, he said, a question of bread versus beer. The regulation actually provided for the malting of 70 per cent. only of the output of beer for the financial year ending on March 31st, which is equivalent to a reduction of 50 per cent. on the pre-war production. Before the war the output was 36.000,000 standard barrels; for the coming year it will be 18,200,000 only.

Q.—Is the wife of Nicholas II. a German princess by birth?

A.—She was born in Hesse, but her mother was Princess Alice of England, favourite daughter of Queen Victoria, sister of Edward VII., and aunt of King George V. Her sister maried Prince Louis of Battenberg, who was first Sea Lord when the war broke out. Her father was Grand Duke Ludwig of Hesse.

Q.—How does an aeroplane effect a safe landing at night?

A.—That is one of the greatest problems an aviator has to solve, and in the early days of the war many disasters overtook the men who went up at night, owing to the bad landings. The Germans claim to have solved the problem in an ingenious manner. A pit is dug in the centre of the aerodrome, which is covered over with a thick sheet of glass to withstand the weight of an aeroplane, should its wheels pass over it. A powerful white light is placed in the pit. At a distance of about 250 feet from this light, and also sunk in the ground, are placed four red lights corresponding to the cardinal points of the compass. Each of these red lights is connected by underground wires to a wind vane, mounted on a mast or tower at some convenient point. At night the central light glows constantly, while the red light in the direction of the wind that happens to be blowing, also shows, indicating to the pilot the wind conditions where the landing is to be made.

Q.—When the holders of the second British War Loan wished to convert into the last one were they obliged to take an equal amount of new stock as was the case when consols were converted into the first loan?

A.—No, they simply gave notice that they wished to convert. £100 worth of the second loan stock entitled the holder to £100 worth of 4 per cent. stock in the new loan. The second loan yielded 4½ per cent., but was subject to income tax, whereas the 4 per cent. new loan was free from it. Holders of £100 worth of the 4½ per cent. stock in the second loan could also convert into the 5 per cent. stock of the last loan, which was, however, subject to income tax. For every £100 worth of stock, though, that they held in the second loan they received £105 5s. 3d. worth in the last one, so that it would seem that the net result of the conversion would be to increase the payments made on the amount subscribed to the second loan by 1 per cent.! As this loan, after the first had been converted into it, amounted to just under £1,000,000,000, that means that the Government will have to pay stock-holders in it £10,000,000 more a year than would have been the case had they not availed themselves of the opportunity of converting into the last loan. It is not surprising, then, that the Government expressly announced that stock-holders in the last loan have no right of conversion into any future issue that may be made.

Q.—Could you give me any particulars concerning the Austrian War Loans?

A.—The fifth loan has just been floated, and preliminary figures show that a total of 4,412,800,000 krone have been obtained, that is to say, £176,512,000. The fourth loan realised 4,520,300,000, the third 4,202,600,000, the second 2,688,300,000, and the first 2,200,700,000 krone.

Q.—What prices are eggs fetching in England just now?

A.—The retail price appears to have gone as high as 4/6 a dozen. This is due

to the fact that there has been so tremendous a falling-off in eggs imported since the war begun. In 1913 no less than 2,589,594,000 eggs were imported, worth £9,590,602. In 1916 the imports totalled only 792,769,320, a decrease of 1,796,824,680. The value of the 1916 imports, however, was £4,741,401. Thus, while the numbers imported had decreased by more than two-thirds, the value had only decreased by one-half. In 1913 imported eggs were sold at 8/10¼ per great hundred (120 eggs); last year they fetched 14/4¼. English eggs are now selling at from 20/- to 39/- the great hundred, Irish eggs from 27/- to 28/-, Canadian 23/-, and American at 19/-. Naturally the value of the home production has gone up immensely, although the number of eggs and fowls does not appear to have greatly increased. The following table compares 1913 with 1916:

Consumptive Value of Eggs and Poultry.

	1913	1916	Variation
	£	£	£
British	9,000,000	14,400,000	+5,400,000
Irish	5,000,000	8,000,000	+3,000,000
Imported	10,545,000	5,377,000	−5,168,000
	24,545,000	27,777,000	+3,232,000

Q.—What was the price at which potatoes were fixed for this year in Great Britain?

A.—The fixing of prices created a good deal of criticism and protest at home, and ultimately it was decided that the prices mentioned should not be regarded as contract prices, but as minimum prices, guaranteed by the Government for potatoes of the first quality. Prices were as follows:—

£5 15s. per ton for delivery from December 15th to January 31st.

£6 per ton for delivery in February and March.

£6 10s. per ton for delivery for the remainder of the season, for quantities of not less than six tons, F.O.B. or F.O.R.

Q.—You mentioned in your last issue that it was probable that before long the daily war expenditure of Great Britain would touch seven million pounds. When do you estimate that that figure will be reached?

A.—It has already been reached. Mr. Bonar Law, speaking in the House of Commons on March 19th, said that the daily expenditure between 11th February and 31st March of this year was no less than £7,260,000, and that the average daily expenditure for the year which ends on March 31st, 1917, was £6,000,000. Previous estimates had placed the daily average for the financial year, closing this month, at £5,400.000, from which it would seem that the war has cost Great Britain £219,000,000 more this year than was suggested it would do when Bonar Law spoke a couple of months ago.

Q.—How many Prime Ministers has Russia had since the outbreak of war?

A.—Six, namely MM. Kokovtsoff, Goremykin, Sturmer, Trepoff, Prince Golitzin, and Prince Ivoff. The only man who has remained always in the Government is the Finance Minister, M. Pierre Bark.

Q.—When was the name of the Russian capital changed from St. Petersburg to Petrograd?

A.—This was done by Imperial ukase on September 1st, 1914. The city now has a population of well over 2,000,000, but after the Grand Duke evacuated Poland this was temporarily increased by almost another million.

Q.—How are the members of the Duma elected?

A.—By a process probably the most complicated in the world. The original manifesto which brought the Duma into being was altered by Imperial ukase in 1907, it having been found that under the original arrangement the Cadet Party—the Constitutional Democrats, which included the Socialists and exiles returned to Russia when the Constitution was promised in 1905—was in overwhelming strength. The Cadets were so impracticable that the first Duma was at once dissolved, and being still in great majority in the second, it was resolved to alter the electoral law, so that representation should be more Russian, and more conservative. The members returned from Siberia, the Caucasus and Poland were reduced in number from 89 to 39, the Central Asian Steppes were disfranchised altogether (they formerly sent 23 members), and the number of representatives were reduced in all from 524 to 442. The members are elected by a complicated system of electorial colleges which can be, and were, so manipulated as to leave the power in the hands of the beaurocracy and landed proprietors.

Q.—Do the people then vote for members of an electoral college like that which elects the President of the United States?

A.—It is nothing like so simple as that. To give a lucid description of the method

employed is exceedingly difficult. In an attempt to do so we have to begin with the *Mir*. This is a body in the village community consisting of all the peasant landowners of the village. The *Mir* controls the village to some extent. In each district the *Mirs* elect members to what is called a *Volost*. Above the *Volost* is the *Zemstov*. There is one *Zemstov* for every province, or Government. Large landed proprietors, who own 590 acres and over, sit on the *Zemstov* board in person. The small landowners send delegates, so do the wealthier townsmen. The less wealthy urban classes also are represented, and finally the peasants send delegates who are selected by the *Volosts* mentioned above. The electoral colleges, who elect the members to the Duma, are elected by electoral assemblies chosen by the three classes of landed proprietors, citizens and peasants just as the members of the *Zemstovs* are. Consequently the large landed proprietors, who sit in person, vote practically direct for the member, although actually in the second degree, as the electoral college finally does the selecting. The lesser proprietors who are represented by delegates elect in the third degree. The peasants elect only in the fourth degree, as their delegates are selected by the *Volosts*. The urban population is divided into categories, and elect members to the electoral college not according to the number of taxpayers, but according to the amount paid, thus giving a great preponderance to the richer classes.

Q.—Are the workmen represented at all?

A.—They are specially treated. Every industrial concern employing fifty workers or over elects one or more delegates to the electoral college of the particular Government in which it is situated. If it were not for the provision that at least one Duma member must be chosen in each Government from each of the five classes represented in the college, it is obvious that the progressive elements would not have had any representation at all in the Russian Parliament. This rule makes it imperative that a fixed minimum of peasant members must be sent to the Duma, a fixed minimum of landed proprietors, and so on. But the Radical elements in the Duma practically all come from the cities of Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Riga, Warsaw and Lodz. These seven cities elect their representatives for the Duma direct, although even in their case special precautions are taken to give the advantage to the wealthy electors.

Q.—Has the Duma much power?

A.—It appears to have taken it; but, according to the Constitution it had very little. It was allowed to have nothing to do with the army or navy. Legislation is in the hands of Ministers, who are responsible not to the Duma, but to the Tsar. Members may originate legislation, but not until it has the approval of the Minister of the Department concerned. If by a two-thirds majority the Duma arraigns the action of a Minister, the President of the Imperial Council lays the case before the Tsar, who decides the matter. The Duma has little real power over finance, more than half the annual expenditure of the country in times of peace being entirely outside the control of Parliament. Ministers could, and did, impose taxation without consulting the Duma at all, for when it is not sitting the Tsar has the power to issue ordinances having the force of law. He has also the power of dissolving the Duma or proroguing it whenever he likes. The Duma, during the last three or four years, established its position so well that it was beginning to take a larger share in public affairs, and would brook no curbing.

Q.—Is their a House of Lords, or Senate, in Russia?

A.—There is an Upper House called the Council of the Empire, consisting of 196 members, half being nominated by the Emperor and half being elected. The Tsar nominates his own Ministers, who are *ex officio* members of the Council. Of the 96 elected members the Monks select three, the clergy three, the Corporations of Nobles eighteen, the Academies of Science and the Universities six, the Chambers of Commerce six, the Industrial Councils six, the Zemstovs thirty-four, Governments having no Zemstovs sixteen, and Poland six. What is called the Senate has really nothing to do with legislative matters. It is actually a sort of Supreme Court, but carries out a great variety of functions. All its members are nominees of the Tsar.

Q.—Could you tell me how many Turkish soldiers there are in the field at present?

A.—Various estimates have been made, but probably the most accurate is that of Colonel Repington, *The Times* military expert, who calculates that there are from fifty to fifty-five divisions still under arms. That would make about a million men. He

distributes them as follows:—23-25 on the Caucasus front; 5-7 in Arabia; 5-6 in Austria and Roumania; 5 in Syria; 3 in Mesopotamia; 3 in Persia; 2 at the Dardanelles; 1 at Constantinople; 1 at Smyrna; 1 at Cilicia, and 1 on the Salonika front. Since that estimate was made it is probable that there has been considerable change in the distribution of Turkish military strength. If it is accurate, there would be only 60,000 men opposed to General Maude about Bagdad, and a like number retreating on that city from Persia.

Q.—Have any estimates been made as to the cost of killing a man in the present war?

A.—It is almost impossible to arrive at that. According to the estimates of enemy losses, 2,000,000 men have been killed. As the Allied expenditure to date amounts to £10,000,000,000, that works out at £5000 per man. On this assumption, an American journalist has suggested that it would be a good plan to offer a bonus of £200 to every German private who surrenders. Apparently it would be worth making that bonus far larger if there were any chance of enemy soldiers availing themselves of the offer.

Q.—Who will represent India at the Imperial Conference?

A.—The Secretary of State, Mr. Austin Chamberlain, will represent India, but he is to have the assistance of three men who are travelling from India for the purpose of being present at the Conference. These are Sir James Meeston, Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, His Highness the Maharajah of Bilkaner, and Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha.

Q.—Does the Government ordinance calling for the registration of all European British subjects in India between the ages of sixteen and fifty apply to the Eurasians?

A.—Considerable doubt at first existed as to whether the Eurasians—men with one parent European and the other a native Indian—were included in the ordinance. European British subject is defined as "any subject of His Majesty born, naturalised or domiciled in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or in any of the European, American, or Australian colonies or possessions of His Majesty, or in the colony of New Zealand, or in the colony of the Cape of Good Hope or Natal, and any child or grandchild of any such person by legitimate descent." Therefore, any person in India of mixed descent whose father or grandfather was born, naturalised, or domiciled in any part of the Empire named will be included.

Q.—Could you tell me how many Austrian and German ships sheltered in American ports?

A.—Reference has been made to this in previous numbers. Exact particulars of the number of ships which fled to Manila have not been published. In American harbours, however, there are 68 merchant ships of the Central Powers. Of these, 54 are German. In New York harbour alone there are 29. A German merchantman sought shelter in the port of San Juan, Porto Rico, and a couple found refuge in the Danish Islands, which have now been purchased by the United States. The only warships interned in American ports are the *Eitel Friedrisch*, and *Kron Prinz Wilhelm*, auxilliary cruisers and the gunboat *Geier*, which is at Honolulu.

Q.—Could you tell me whether there are many State loans maturing this year?

A.—Knibbs' Official Year Book gives full particulars concerning the due dates of the public debts of all the States. According to this invaluable reference book the debts, which matured in 1917, are the following:—

New South Wales	£4,970,352
Victoria	4,920,060
Queensland	—
South Australia	3,448,164
West Australia	2,723,081
Tasmania	944,703
Total	17,006,450

Queensland is in the happy position of having to redeem or convert no loans at all for four years, but in 1924 and 1925 she has to convert or redeem £12,973,834 and £11,829,100 respectively. 1924 is a pretty bad year for New South Wales also, as in it a loan for no less than £16,698,065 falls due.

A REAL HISTORY OF THE WAR.

Many readers have urged me to write a history of the war whilst the struggle is going on, but it would be doing justice neither to my readers nor myself to attempt to bring out such a history at the present time. I intend, later on, to make some permanent addition to the literature of the terrific conflict, but not until I can do so unhampered by the regulations. When I do publish a book, or books, on the war, I wish what I have to say to appear in unexpurgated form, and of course that cannot be done until after the conclusion of peace. When the struggle is over I think I can promise my readers a highly interesting and impartial account thereof!

There is no doubt that most people who have taken an intelligent interest in the European conflict are anxious to obtain some carefully compiled history of the events which led up to the outbreak of war and of the happenings in the war itself. It is, however, exceedingly difficult to get any balanced record of the military doings of the great armies during the last two and a-half years. Most of the histories published are so hopelessly biassed as to be of little real worth. We may fully sympathise with the sentiments which induced the authors to take the one-sided view disclosed in their writings, but, at the same time, wanting a truthful account, their narratives are of little use to us.

There are, fortunately though, men who, even in the heat and burden of the struggle, can exercise their discriminating faculties and give to the world a fairly accurate account of actual happenings. Because of this ability, Mr. John Buchan's History of the War, published by Messrs. T. Nelson and Sons, is easily the best I have yet read. Mr. Buchan has done many good things in recent years, but probably nothing better than this running account of the struggle which has appeared in monthly volumes for the last fourteen months. He shows himself a true historian, for he manages to preserve a correct sense of proportion, and sees events in their right perspective.

No man, whilst the war is still raging, can hope to be absolutely accurate or to properly assess the real importance of this or that happening, but Mr. Buchan has on the whole shown excellent judgment in writing his History. He occasionally is unable to avoid errors of deduction, and even statement, but such errors are inevitable when the historian is a patriotic citizen of one of the countries at war. But whilst he naturally views the doings of the Allies more favourably than those of the enemy, he does not withhold recognition of the military feats of the foe. It is indeed a relief to read the balanced narrative of Mr. Buchan after perusing some of the other so-called histories which have already appeared.

Mr. Buchan has been able to get at official documents and reports from all sources, utterly unobtainable in far-away Australia, and there is much, therefore, in his story of the struggle which is entirely new to us here. One of the best features in the History is the maps and plans. It is impossible to properly grasp the military story of the great struggle without diagrams and maps. Those supplied by Mr. Buchan are all specially drawn to illustrate the text, and the fact that there are no less than 340 of them in the fourteen volumes shows that he thoroughly appreciates the need for graphical explanation of military actions. Each volume averages 270 pages, the type is easy to read, and the general get-up of the books is good. In the appendices Mr Buchan reprints official documents which it is exceedingly important to have in any adequate history of the war. These include despatches from generals in the field, from fleet commanders, and diplomatic correspondence between the European and American Governments.

The last volume, No. XIV., is of special interest just now, as it tells of the Fall of Kut, and deals generally with the situation in Mesopotamia. It also touches on the war in the Eastern Mediterranean, illustrating the account of the Sinai operations with a most excellent double page map. The next number, almost due, will deal with the great Somme Offensive. Altogether Nelson's History of the War is the most competent, coherent and well-balanced story of the frightful struggle in Europe it is at present possible to obtain. The convenient size of the volumes makes it possible to carry them easily in the pocket, and their low price puts them within the reach of everyone. None who reads this history can fail to get a better grasp of the whole struggle, both political and military, than they had before.

HOW TO DEVELOP AUSTRALIA.

III.—THE MAKING OF ROADS.

The Romans developed continents by building great arterial roads. We British develop huge continents by building railways. But whilst the Roman roads tapped areas of great wealth—as do our railways—the ancient Empire builders found it necessary to organise a complete system of subsidiary roads which fed their main highways, otherwise these served but as connecting links between towns and cities, were of little use in developing the rich country through which they ran. In the more rapid, bustling days in which we live, the railways have been rushed through, but, alas! the feeding roads have been sadly neglected!

That conclusion is forced on the merest amateur in traffic matters by a perusal of the two last reports of the Country Roads Board of Victoria—and Victoria is typical of all the other States although perhaps in less bad case than they. These two reports make painful reading for they show that, in certain parts of the country, there is actually retrogression to chronicle instead of progress, owing to the inability of settlers to get their produce to market. After reading these reports, one begins to understand some of the causes which make our railways show a loss, why the cost of living is continually increasing, and why decentralisation is proving an almost impossible task.

We propose not only to repatriate our soldiers and put them on the land, but we speak of thousands of immigrants who will inevitably gravitate to this country to escape the grinding taxation of Europe, but, unless we get busy on road construction we will in all probability fail either to repatriate our soldiers or to keep the coming hosts of immigrants. Everyone has probably met men who have been forced to gravitate to the great Australian cities simply because of the terrible isolation to which they have been condemned, and of the inability of getting their produce to market. In nine cases out of ten this is due to lack of roads. Unless the railways are fed by the roads the railways run at a loss, and unless there are decent roads, development of the country is impossible.

A good instance of this is given by the Walhalla railway. This has been built for seven years, and connects that town with Moe, running through a district which is not only beautiful, but is capable of growing splendid fruit. The only connection Walhalla has, however, with the outside world is this railway; what roads there are are hopeless from the traffic point of view, and the trains, in consequence, continue to do the round trip at a loss of £40! In the course of the investigations carried out by the Country Roads Board, which form the basis of the two reports, the Board travelled 21,600 miles, of which 1400 had to be done on horseback, no other means of progress being possible owing to the character of the country or the condition of the roads.

There is a constant outcry against the centralisation of the population of Australia in the great cities, but until the road problem be vigorously attacked, that centralisation will continue and, indeed, get worse. During the last ten years, although the population of Victoria has increased from 1,210,000 to 1,430,000, the population of the State, excluding Melbourne and district, is actually *less* to-day than it was in 1905!

After this war is over Great Britain will inevitably try and induce her Dominions to produce what she requires, and this will mean that the primary products of Australia will have to be greatly developed. Such development, however, will prove impossible unless new districts are tapped by good roads. and old ones, now retrogressing, are given a new lease of live by having trafficable highways put through them. In this connection it is well to keep in view the fact that a sound, well-built road will be much less costly to keep up than a poor, weak one.

The motor car is rapidly revolutionising agricultural methods and transport in other lands, and will certainly do so here, too, in the near future. But motor lorries and cars require good roads, and unless they get them settlement and agricultural production will be terribly retarded. The motor car solves the problem of isolation.

for it puts the farmer within easy reach of his neighbour and of the distant township. Now that we have a network of railways, the laying of new metals is of less importance than the building of proper roads to feed those lines already in existance. There can be no doubt whatever that the future of Australia depends more on the making of roads than on anything else. It is high time that we got on the job.

Not only is road-making imperative, if Australia is to be developed, but it is a legitimate war industry. Every good road, well and truly laid in the right direction, provides a means of military defence against possible invasion, as well as an artery for extension of internal production and commerce in time of peace.

In an undeveloped country like this, the hewing of the path of progress, no matter how rough, must never cease, or Nature will get the better of us. No divinity that we know of ever cut roads for a slothful people in a wilderness; that has been common experience from the days of Moses, upwards and downwards.

There are some roads in the Commonwealth, and many tracks that by courtesy are called roads. The latter are not militarily serviceable because, like Oliver Wendell Holmes' crooked footpath, they follow the vagrant wanderings of the first wayfarer, although lacking the direction of the surveyor's contour lines. Three to six months, it has been said, would be required to shift a sufficient Australian army by the existing railway, to meet an invading force at Sydney. In the bloody-minded condition of the world to-day, he who would call for a moment's delay in strategic road-making, must be classed as a paltering pacifist.

Hitherto our roads have been defined by swagmen, drovers and bullock waggons. Giving evidence before a Federal Commission on the establishment of Australian Naval Bases necessary in the war period, Rear Admiral Creswell, of the Naval Board, remarked that Australian roads lead usually to a river or creek, a place for men and stock to drink at, and do not take that direct course to a deep water port which both commercial and defensive development require. Naval bases are commended as a matter of urgent necessity for points all around our coasts, which Admiral Henderson designated, from Brisbane to Rockhampton, Port Jackson, Jervis Bay, Westernport Bay in Victoria, Port Lincoln in South Australia, and St. George's Sound in the West.

Until these bases are linked by passable roads the co-operation of the land and sea force will be paralysed, and for us that means prospective disaster. When these links are forged our defensive arm will have a long and effective reach, and the same achievement will open the way to unlimited production and a commercial era which to-day exists only in our dreams.

Road-making with the motorist has become a religion in a country where extensive touring can only be pursued on a machine that has the agility of a stump-jump plough. Religious yearnings may lack practicability, but the motorist makes known his doctrine of the Great Highway wherever he goes, and communicates his enthusiasm to all classes. Faith can shift mountains. Even farmers have been fired by the ambition to travel swiftly on a level surface, and in the State of Victoria the conservative "cockie" is weakening in his opposition to the fine work of the Country Roads Board.

Every chain of improved highway expedites the transport of wheat and wool to the seaboard, and sends material succour more rapidly to the armies in France and the beleaguered populace of Britain. Every road opening into arable country opens prospects of comfortable settlements for Australian and British soldier-farmers after the war. The planning and surveying and rough hewing of trans-Australian thoroughfares are works immediately demanded by the military and commercial necessities.

In the building of roads on a bold, continental plan, many industries must be stimulated — stone-crushing, saw-milling, motor-making, the manufacture of cement and the production of steel. The modern road is built of concrete, not mud; it is bound, not by boulders and dust, but by fibres of steel. It is indestructible, a mightier monument than the Pyramids. While the Americans, for the sake of sea trade, were giving expression to their practical genius in the construction of the Panama Canal, they found time also to speed the gospel of the modern road. In addition to the great waterway they have also constructed a magnificant motor highway right across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. The American favour a road of cement concrete, rein-

forced by steel mesh. With reasonable maintenance it is practically everlasting.

Road construction for the carriage of heavy artillery is proceeding with all the furious speed of war activity behind the Allies' lines in France. Even in England, untouched by the feet of the invader, roads are being laid to naval and military bases, day and night. Concrete roads are dependable every day in the year. They make driving easy and safe by daylight or dark, in winter or summer, in rain or sunshine. Being non-absorbent, the surface is cleaned by every rain, and dries quickly. There is no mud in wet weather, no dust in dry weather. Concrete roads when well reinforced are good over swampy land. They are not affected by periodical showers or overflows. The first cost of a concrete is moderate, considering the fact that the materials used in its construction are of lasting quality, that repair expense is lowest in comparison with other types of roads that approach it in permanence. The few slight repairs that may be necessary, are easily made by any careful labourer, with tar kettle and waggon.

Home products and labour are used largely in the construction of concrete roads. What they cost is spent in the community where the funds are raised. These roads have grown in public favour by leaps and bounds as their practical qualities have become more generally known. Prior to 1915 there were in the United States only 1764 miles of concrete road, based on an average width of 16 feet. During 1915 alone 1063 miles of such roads were built, not to mention nearly 6,500,000 square yards of concrete city streets and alleys.

Vermilion County, Illinois, started 1916 by letting contracts on March 17 for nearly 145 miles of concrete roads—the largest contract ever awarded in point of concrete road mileage. Later, Georgetown Township, in the same county, voted to connect itself with the main highway system by building five miles of concrete road, making a total of practically 150 miles of concrete highway now to be constructed in Vermilion County.

The work never ceases. Belligerents, friends and foes, neutrals and those who have entered the vague "no-man's-land" of a "break in diplomatic relations"—all are hard at it. The motor age has set the world on wheels. If our neighbours in Mars astonish us with their canals, how they must marvel gazing at the new striped condition of earthly continents; it is not a craze, it is a dire necessity. The old Australia could not have been forced to yield the wealth of its mines without a bullock track. The richness of our virgin soil cannot be fructified without motor highways.

Very closely associated with the question of roads is the problem of forest culture. Lately a scheme has been promulgated for planting a grove of Norfolk Island Pines at Lorne, the Victorian watering place. The holiday-makers who conceived this pretty and fairly practical idea have let the steam of their enthusiasm frame in their imagination a spacious dream of a continuous plantation following the whole eastern coastline of the Commonwealth. In benevolent mood they propose to find employment for returned soldiers in watering the trees. There are places along the coast where the only available water is in the sea, and places also where the most trench-hardened soldier would not stay for five minutes without wishing to be back in Flanders among the bullets, in a more exciting and possibly a more healthy atmosphere. Every man who stays at home now wants to do something for the returned soldiers. But when the men do come back they will want to do something for themselves, and the things they will do may be surprisingly different from the cut and dried positions that the good souls here are so unctiously devising for them .

The road-making proposition is a national enterprise, aiming at the increase of commerce, production and manufacture. It is already in well-organised operation by Government bodies in New South Wales and Victoria, and if the Governments decide to extend it on a large scale they can do so by direct action. It does not offer rivalry, but co-operation to the tree planters. The right place to plant trees is along the highways, where they will serve the double purpose of affording shade and shelter to travelling human beings and stock, and providing timber for buildings in townships and on farms, and for transport along the roads to the metropolis, and for local use and export.

In California dry land is purchased at £6 an acre, and the cost of planting 1000 trees to the acre, supervision, insurance, guard against fire risk and so forth, brings the outlay up to £11 or £12 per acre. In ten years the cuttings yield £32 per acre. As a break wind for the roads, and the contiguous farms, a highway forest would be invaluable. The prospective timber yield is illimitable; it is necessary that the

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timber should be grown, as foreign supplies have been largely cut up for the war. A local timber industry, allied with road-making, would kill innumerable birds with two stones. It would solve the present unemployment problem, and provide a congeries of new industries to accommodate both the returning soldiers and the immigrant armies which we expect to come to us after the war.

FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS QUARTER.

Very little reliable information is received in these parts regarding the real state of affairs—economic and otherwise—in Turkey. Occasionally we hear of revolutionary movements, of the appalling hardships of the poorer classes, the deplorable condition of the country's finances, and so forth, but the news, though probably true, is rarely substantiated, and seldom emanates, of course, from official sources. For that reason, the publication of the report of the Council of Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt (consisting at present of the German, Austrian and Turkish members), covering the period for March, 1914, to March, 1915—though belated, is unusually interesting and unique. British holders of Turkish bonds, of course, cannot expect to receive any immediate return from their holdings, and the final adjustment of their claims will necessarily form part of the eventual peace negotiations.

* * *

Since Turkey came into the war in November, 1914, the record includes less than five months of administration under war conditions, and certainly does not give much indication of the financial position of the Debt Council at the present time. Yet it is significant that even at that early stage, a very big falling off occurred in the revenues accruing to the administration. As compared with 1913-14 there was a drop of 33.40 per cent., the gross receipts amounting to £T3,581,400, as against £T5,378,900, representing a decrease of £T1,797,400. Of that sum £T268,000 was attributable to the default of the Turkish Government, in respect to the Eastern Roumelian annuity, the Cyprus tribute and the half-yearly payment of the Tumbiki revenue. The remainder was due to the actual falling off in revenue during the last part of the year, and though the 1913-14 figures were the largest on record, the shrinkage was sufficiently obvious.

* * *

After crediting the gross receipts with the balance brought forward and deducting expenses of administration, there was a net income of £T2,888,000, which was more than sufficient to meet the full service of the Unified Debt, a surplus of £T730,700 being exhibited, of which, according to the usual practice, 75 per cent., or £T538,000, was handed back to the Turkish Government. Only about 15 per cent. of the sum due to the bond-holders on the half-year's interest appears actually to have been paid, however, this representing the proportion of bonds held by the Central Powers, or by neutrals. The balance is supposedly held for the purpose of meeting the claims of Allied bond-holders after the war, but according to *The Financial Times*, it is more than doubtful whether they will then actually be available, since the elaborate international organisation for financing the country's debt has now broken up completely. When terms have eventually been come to it is considered probable that a new arrangement will have to be made with the Allied bond-holders, who would appear to hold about 85 per cent. of the total debt.

* * *

The dependence of Great Britain upon oversea countries for mineral products was attended to by Professor Fearnsides, Sorby Professor of Geology at the University of Sheffield. When addressing the Society of Engineers recently on the subject of "The British Iron and Steel Industries," the Professor stated that for many years almost exactly one-half of the pig-iron made in Great Britain had its origin in ores which came from overseas. The total home production of iron ore was about 16 millions tons per year. Of the eight million tons of foreign ore imported over five million tons came from Spain. The North African colonies of France ranked second, with over 1,000,000 tons, and Scandinavia third with just under a million tons of ore in 1913. Of other materials required for steel making in Britain, the greater proportion was imported from overseas. In 1913 over 1,200,000 tons of semi-manufactured metal came to Britain from Germany, as well as 585,000 tons of similar material

made up in Belgium. By 1913 the British engineering industry had come to rely to a dangerous degree for raw material on German sources of supply, but since the war the increased needs of the British engineering trades had been met by an increase in the home production of iron and steel.

* * *

Loan raising might be aptly described as the most popular national pastime of today. Next to blood-letting, it is certainly the business which is regarded as of most vital national import. Great Britain has recently conducted a flotation which easily beat all previous records in the domain of high finance, obtaining for her "Victory" issue a sum which in total ran into the fourth figure in the millions column, or, as the American system of numeration would render it, into the first column of billions. France has been at intervals, more or less busy in the loan-raising department. Germany has either floated or "arranged" her fifth venture—within her own borders, perforce—and we have "heard from" Turkey as a borrower.

* * *

In the East, too, there have been issues of not a little importance. China, after much squabbling, characteristic of that happy yet devious people, has managed to obtain some little assistance in the shape of credit abroad, her effort in the United States provoking a great deal of caustic criticism—all of which doubtless glided from the official back of the Celestial Treasurer without doing him much harm, either personally or as the representative of his "peculiar" people. On this side of the globe, Russia, too, has been at work "gathering where she had not strewed," to wit, in Japan. It is not a great while since these two nations were at daggers drawn one against the other. Now such fast friends have they become, that they borrow and lend with a freedom suggestive of aeons of blissful financial inter-relationship. Time makes strange whirligigs.

* * *

From the foregoing it will be noticed that the bulk of the borrowings have put money into the purses of the Allies. Roumania, of course, has had help, and Serbia has not been altogether neglected, whilst only a comparatively short period prior to her entrance into the conflict Bulgaria was assisted financially by Great Britain. Among the most recent announcements of the application of nations for funds is one from Spain, where a trifle of £40,000,000 is needed as an exchange stabiliser. In October last, in virtue of a royal decree, the Bank of Spain offered for sale Treasury bonds to the amount of 223,975,000 pesetas, carrying interest at the rate of 4 per cent. These bonds have the right of conversion at full value in any future consolidation of the national debt, so it is likely that a proportion will be merged in the impending issue. Already the Cortes has ratified credits amounting to 10,201,059 pesetas.

* * *

Within the Empire, "the latest" loan issue comes from Canada, where arrangements have been completed lately for securing £30,000,000 at 5 per cent. for a period of twenty years. The minimum price of subscription has been set at 96, so that the investor stands to clear about one-third above the stated interest yield, allowing for redemption. It has been a striking feature of Canadian loans, since the outbreak of the war, that with every fresh application for credit, either domestic or otherwise, she has been able to offer better terms. Hence it is that each flotation has been a greater success than that which preceded it.

* * *

When, in November, 1915, the Dominion asked her people to find her 50,000,000 dols., they responded with a subscription of close upon 100,000,000 dollars. The cute Canadian financiers did not let slip this golden opportunity. They wisely decided to "take the lot," and they improved the opportunity by placing the moiety remaining, after satisfaction of their own needs, at the disposal of the mother country. Since then, Canada has been of material aid to the home authorities, as we have already chronicled in STEAD'S REVIEW from time to time. As to the result of her latest "sounding" of the market, there can be little reason for uneasiness in the minds of her financiers.

* * *

Since the outbreak of the war Great Britain has arranged three collateral loans in New York, viz., £50,000,000 in August, 1916, £60,000,000 in October, 1916, and £50,000,000, referred to in our last number, making a total of £160,000,000, Including the foregoing the British Government has borrowed £228,900,000 in U.S.A., since the autumn of 1915, when the British loan-raising commenced in New York.

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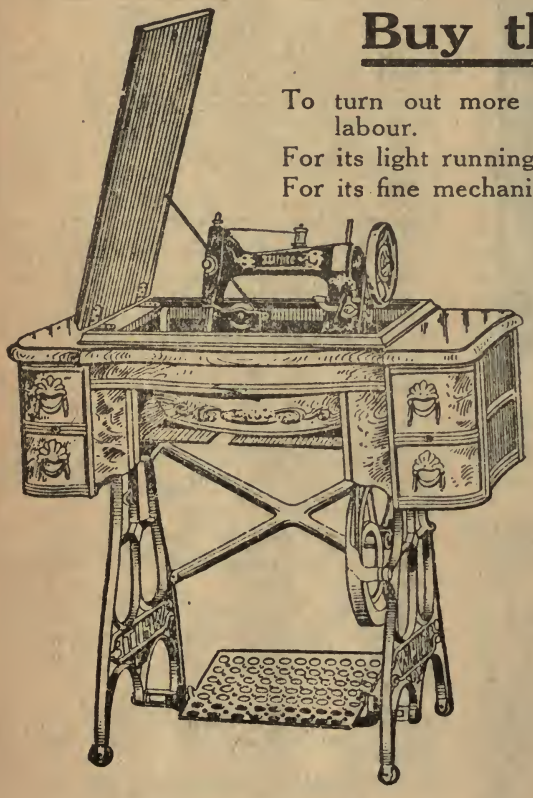

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